



*Humans need love*

*Even the toughest guy needs love*

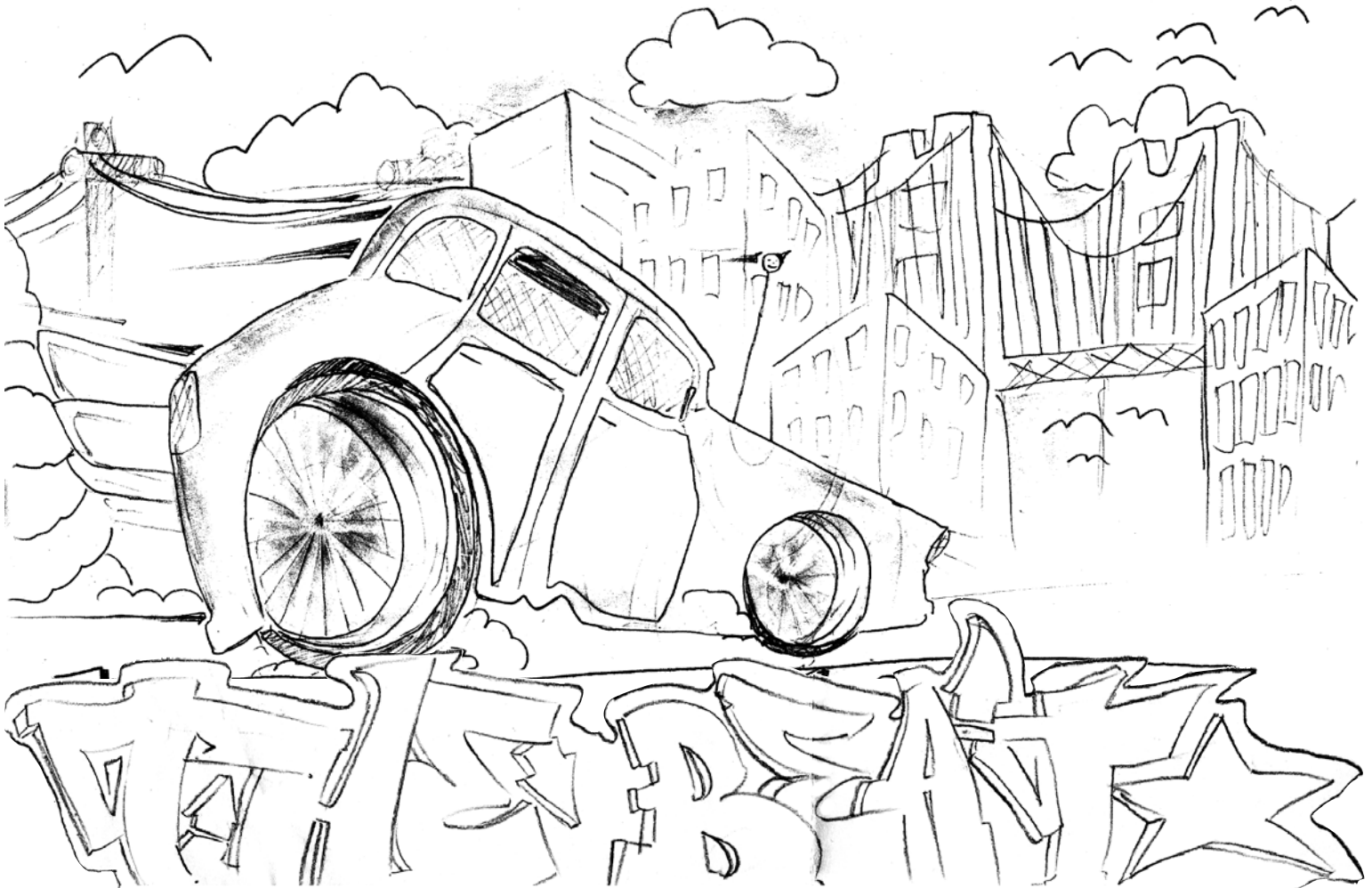
*Love makes us human*

*Love for your family, friends, and soul mate*

*Love can make your eyes open to new possibilities*

*And make your dreams become reality*

*read the rest of Viet Tiger's POW on page 4*



**Another week**, another Beat, another hustle to get this fine issue into your hands. This morning, was like any other deadline we at The Beat Within go through each week. Walking into the office we still had a number of units to edit, still had to read a few thousand plus words for the BWO section, still had to finish laying out this issue, and yes indeed we still had to write an editor's note. Well, this editor was definitely not ready to ramble on, so what better choice to send this blank page to be filled to, than to our amazing colleague, Michael Kroll. Michael was more than ready and willing, but he had to write what you are about to read in less than forty-five minutes, and if you don't mind us saying, he did one hell of a job. Read on! Michael, take it away...!

This morning, I listened to a radio program discussing a new law in California, SB81, that is designed to reduce the number of young men and women sent to the California Youth Authority (now renamed the Division of Juvenile Justice, on the theory that a name change on the outside changes the facts on the inside...). This show included one young man who actually had the experience of a long CYA commitment, as well as half a dozen other "experts" — from state lawmakers, to county probation officers to outsiders who run their own programs. In truth, none of these talking heads shed very much light on the destructive nature of our criminal justice system, but it did reveal, yet again, the huge divide between the experiences of the "experts" and the experiences of those who have to consume the criminal justice products these experts put forth.

Once again, the "experts" talked about the promise of reform. But what is the "reform" these experts have put together in SB81? The bill is designed to return all but the most violent offenders back to the counties they come from where — in theory — the money that bloated the CYA pockets will follow them in order to provide programs at the local level. It's hard to find fault with the idea that keeping people close to home where their family and community support systems are strongest is better than sending them far from home into large, impersonal institutions behind walls, where all manner of abuse goes on without fear of any prying eyes from the outside. In fact, if this law does just that much — reduce the population of our dysfunctional and abusive state juvenile prison system — it will simply be continuing a trend that has been ongoing for more than a decade. From a high of more than 10,000 incarcerated kids, the CYA (we insist on the old name, because that is what those who have been ground up in it know it to be), the numbers have fallen to about 3,500. If SB81 does as it promises to do, that number should fall again by about half.

But those other kids, the ones who will not be sent off to this far-flung kiddie Gulag, what will happen to them at the county level? The state promises to send about half as much money to the county for each child kept there that they now spend on that same kid by sending him away. Half the money buys half the services. In the newly passed state budget, the governor slashed millions from programs designated to the counties for juvenile justice reform (while protecting a tax credit for yacht owners in the state. But then, after all, yacht owners vote...)

So, where does all this leave us? Back with the "experts" dictating the "appropriate" reaction to young lawbreakers with hardly a nod to those who are trying to stay alive in the streets of Oakland and San Francisco, Redwood City and Marin City. These youngsters are the true experts. They are the ones who must live not only within the war zones, but also with the consequences imposed by those with power in our state and communities. And this is the disconnect that makes me wonder how this acclaimed "reform" can succeed. Yes, of course we should not expect to make people better citizens by taking them out of society. (That notion is as old as the American prison experiment itself, and has been a failure since the first.) But without a change in thinking, the problems of absentee parents, of abusive or drug addicted parents, of crumbling schools and non-existent services for struggling mothers and their children, will only lead to more of the same. And when I

talk about a change of thinking, I mean in the minds of those so-called experts.

I guess what this rant is trying to convey is that the problems of our inner cities have produced a national failure of tremendous proportions leading to child-on-child murder, mental health problems that get treated as criminal justice problems which then bleed into the state criminal justice system with the largest prison system in the world! We have a President who finds it necessary to fight a distant war in Iraq, draining the national treasury of \$300 billion, and still counting! But what about the war at home, right here on our streets? Devoting resources to that war does not get you votes, and therefore does not get the resources.

Let me just say that I hope the promise of this "reform" is realized — which means I hope the counties don't simply take this as an opportunity to take kids out of one failed institution and put them in another. The conditions we have allowed to fester into this national disease cannot be swept under the rug of jails and prisons, out of sight and out of mind. They are not so easily contained, and until those who are hailed as "experts" begin to listen to you, who are the real experts, I fear this will be one more step on the road to hell, strewn as it is with good intentions.

Thanks Michael. Now for our topics at hand! The first topic addressed was the very popular, "Dog Fight" - Atlanta Falcons Quarterback Michael Vick - 27 years old - was recently indicted for running an illegal dog fighting operation based at his home in Virginia. If convicted, Vick could face up to six years in prison. Even before his trial, he has already lost millions of dollars in endorsements by Nike and the removal of products with his name on them. There have been many rumors in the media about his involvement in the fights, which included breeding pit bulls, paying off bets and killing losing dogs after fights. Have any of you ever attended a dog fight? What was it like? Do you think that they should be considered a crime, or do you think this is a legitimate way to make money? Vick was a very successful sports figure, so what would you say to him if he were your homie about dog fighting, and about ruining his career?

OUR second topic, "A memorable good-bye" - For better or for worse, all of us have had to say-good-bye to someone close and dear. Sometimes, we were able to do this before they passed. Sometimes, we said our good-byes after they were gone. This week we want you to take us to that time and place when you found yourself saying good-bye to someone you truly cared for.

Last but not least, "That Horror Movie" - Do you remember the first time you went to a horror movie that really scared the you-know-what out of you? What movie was it? How old were you? Who went to this movie with you, and were they as scared as you were? What was the thing that scared you the most about the movie? Do you think, if you saw the same movie at your age now, it would have the same effect?

Knowing this, we think our young writers in issue 12.32 truly step up on topics this week, (as well as our always impressive BWO writers). The writing is very powerful, particularly the pieces on the topic, "a memorable good-bye."

For no particular reason, but because this editor appreciates the rhythms of this legend, this issue goes out to the one and only Bo Diddley who is recovering from a heart attack. The 78-year-old musician is presently recovering in a hospital in Florida. His unique rhythms and guitar style influenced many artists, from Buddy Holly to the Rolling Stones and U2, to name a few. Diddley helped lay the foundation for rock 'n' roll in the mid-1950s when he developed a syncopated "hambone" beat - known as the "Bo Diddley" beat. Lets hope Diddley, a living music legend, has the strength to get back on stage and rock n roll for his fans.

Ok Beat readers, thanks for reading, see you shortly! Don't hesitate to write/call us if we can be of any service. Until the next one!

**The Beat Within**, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

**To our writers:** What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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**Art:** Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

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## The Beat Without 48





### Love...

To me, I think love is one of the things that drives us  
the most  
Love from my family, makes me feel at home, even  
though I'm not  
Love from my homies is powerful too.  
Even though we are not blood related. They are like my  
family.  
Love is so strong  
Humans need love  
Even the toughest guy needs love  
Love makes us human  
Love for your family, friends, and soul mate  
Love can make your eyes open to new possibilities  
And make your dreams become reality  
I love all my homies, my family and I love this girl  
I hope I will see again when I get out.  
Love is what keeps me standing strong and drives me on  
and on and on and

**-Viet Tiger, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Love definitely keeps us a live, then again love can bury us in pain. Best to you with finding and holding onto the love that means the most to you.

### My Grandparents And Me

My grandpa and grandma are sick and have no one to take care of them. Before I was here, I was out there. Now that they need me, I'm in here. My grandma can't sit up or move. She should be laying in bed, getting better. Instead, she gets up and helps my grandpa and cooks for him, when it should be me instead of her. If she keeps moving she could hurt herself, or something much worse. Who is there to help her? Not me, because I'm here.

I wish I was there, helping them both, driving them to their appointments. They can no longer drive, so it's up to me. They took care of me when I was young and when I was sick they never let me down. But now it's my turn to take care of them. But I feel that I've let them down by being here. I should be home with them. They've done so much. Now they can do no more. I should be the one taking care of them because they are sick. They were always there for me, but I'm not there for them.

**-Anselmo, Santa Cruz**

**From The Beat:** We are very sorry that you can't be there for your grandparents. We hope you can get word to them that you are OK. That's what they'll be most concerned about. Do good and get out soon. The best way to help them now is to write them loving letters and let them know you've learned an important lesson. Let them know how much you care about them.

### RIP Jefito

Dad, if I could just say Hi.  
You left me, without a good-bye.  
It wasn't your fault –  
it was destiny.

Now I can't show you the best of me.  
My life is a struggle without you near,  
my life is full of mysteries.

I fear you were supposed to show me the way  
but God pulled your number and took you away.  
I wish God would take me up there with you,  
so I can rest and be with you,  
far away from my cell  
where people say it's a living hell.

**-Chico, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This is a great piece, very rhythmic and emotional. Have you ever put your words to beats? This would be a good piece for that.

### Dog Fight

Michael Vick is being tried for dog fighting and may face up to six years. Although I think that Mike is wrong for dog fighting and that dog fighting in general is wrong – I think that Mike deserves another chance.

He is human like the rest of us and, even if he is a great quarterback and a superstar, he is not exempt from making mistakes. We all make mistakes and imprisonment is not always the answer. The point of doing time should be to change a person or make them see things to where they seek an alternative. If we give Michael Vick time, it will ruin his career – making it hard to face society afterwards. I'm not escaping the fact that this is a crime, but I'm simply implying that there's a better alternative.

Maybe Vick just doesn't know the true nature of animals and that the value of all life is equal, but locking him up doesn't change that. It doesn't make anything that happened go away. What will it do? Make people say: "Yeah, serves him right!" or "That's what he gets!" But does it save the dog? It might stop him in the future from killing more, but why not seek a solution?

Why not show Vick the true nature of animal life and maybe he'll see it another way? And to be fair: fine him to fund animal care and shelters or open more animal care shelters. That way it is a win-win situation. Think about it, if you make a mistake – even if you think you wouldn't, or if someone close to you made a mistake – don't take it towards this one because everyone's different and views things different – would you want a punishment with no solution?

Or an alternative with a solution that benefits society? We all deserve second chances to rewrite wrongs of our past, why not Mike Vick? Honestly.

**-Angelo, Santa Clara**

**From the Beat:** The alternative sentencing suggestions you make for Michael Vick are really smart. He just plead guilty today and prosecutors are recommending 12 months. If only our criminal justice system was as intelligent as you.

### My Memorable Goodbye

A long time ago there was a boy who grew up with a loving mother. She took care of the boy and was by his side wherever he went. At first it was the boy and his mother's side of the family. But then the boy moved, so the mother moved as well. From then on it was the boy and the mother. For years they lived together.

The mother struggled to work while the boy went to school. Their lives went on as normal. But one day the mother got a disease and that sickness was intended to kill, over time. And the boy's life slowed down and started to go down. The mother's life was not long. According to the doctor the mother fought to live for two years, for the sake of her son. When the mother finally died, the boy was frozen and angry at himself for not loving his mother enough, and has regretted it ever since. The boy loved his mother and just wished he could have said his true feelings to her. But he never did. So the boy will wait and wait 'til it is his time to get to see her again. He will say to her that her love was never wasted, that she raised a man who made mistakes in life, but was always loving and true. For now, there is nothing to do but live his life until he meets her again.

**-John, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This is a beautiful story and a sad story. We are absolutely certain that this boy's mother would want more than anything that the boy try hard to live a good life, a full life, and that he not be in a hurry to see her again. She knows that life is the most precious gift, a gift she gave him, a gift she wants him to honor and savor and do right by. Living a good life is the best way to honor the loving mother. It's what she would want the most for him.

### The Love That Might Be My Demise

I'm losing the love of my life to drugs.  
 She'd rather do drugs than be with me, most of the time.  
 And she's always manipulating me.  
 She drives me crazy.  
 I tried to commit suicide more than eight times.  
 This love of mine would say she loved me and take it back.  
 I miss her dearly yet she says she's madly in love with me  
 but yet she still talks to her ex for stupid drugs.  
 I don't know what to do, take her back, or leave her.  
 She tells me she doesn't love me, then tells me she does.  
 I don't know if I'm better with or without her.  
 She makes me so happy but brings me so much heart break and misery.  
 The only reason I stay with her is 'cause I'm the only one  
 who's madly in love with her.  
 I have a bad feeling it will be my demise.  
 For she won't be able to return the love.  
 She's done so much for me in our long, long relationship.  
 Why can't she just love me like she used to.

**-Vader, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: She doesn't sound well, Vader. And sick people often have a hard time just trying to take care of themselves. Your job is to understand that you deserve a good life, and that you can't control anyone else's behavior. It's difficult enough to control your own behavior. Wish your friend the best of luck. Hope that she learns to take care of herself. But at this point, your obligation is to take care of yourself. You sound like a bright fellow to us. But look at your own behavior objectively. How smart is it to invest a lot of emotional energy in someone incapable, for whatever reasons, of returning the energy. Start taking care of yourself. Get healthy.*

### I Left My Little Brother And Sister Behind

Last year, one of the worst things happened to my little brother and my little sister. I moved to Marin County, like, three years ago. I moved away from my mom because she was doing really bad and could hardly take care of herself, so how could she take care of me? The biggest mistake I made was leaving my little brother and sister behind. I know now that I would never forgive myself for it.

Last year, 2006, it was Christmas. I was getting ready to go see my mom, because I had spent X-mas with my dad last year. When I got there, my mom was not home, only my aunt and she was crying. She told me my mom had ODeD and that she got her kids taken away. This hurt me so. Until this day I continue to think that I would do anything just to hear their little voices, touch their little hands, or at least know where they are. But I know deep down inside me that they are in a much better environment. They're being fed, and, hopefully, loved. But I'm positive of one thing—Phillip Daniel Longorion III and Allison Gomez will be definitely missed. I love you. I wish you were with me. Stay strong. Hold on tight, little ones, because when I'm eighteen, I promise I will find you. Best believe, when I get out, I'ma be on top of things. Your big sister,

**-Elexie, Marin**

*From The Beat: Please don't blame yourself for your mom ODing and your not being there. Maybe you were going nuts defending yourself when your mom was high. How is your mom doing now? Does your mother know where your brother and sister are? Does she have any legal access to them? If she stops using drugs, can she win custody of her kids back? Why don't you ask your PO or your PD if you have any legal way you can see them? Maybe you can. In the meantime, where will you live when you're free again?*

### Sorry And Goodbye

What up Beat, it's Knuckles from the max. There's someone in my life that past away that I never had a chance to say goodbye or sorry to. This person was the closest person to me while I growing up and died in my bedroom when I was only nine. This person was my grandmother. And I wanted to take this chance to talk about her a lil' and say sorry and goodbye.

Well before she died, she was staying with us at our house when I was still living in Meadow Fair and she didn't have her medicine that she needed. She had left it in Fresno with my uncle's by accident. She never told us about not having her medicine, so when she started to get real sick, we didn't know why. Little did we know, she was slowly, painfully dying.

My grandma meant everything to me. She would take me everywhere with her and always buy me stuff, but the reason I wanna say sorry is because while her last days of life, me and my family were hella mean to her because she would always bug for us to do her favors like to go get her something from the kitchen or some other room to another.

She was so weak she was holding on to the walls to walk. I hated myself knowing I could've made her last days so much easier! So grandma I'm sorry!

After she died, that's when the family started tearing up and everything went wrong. So to answer your question from my piece, "Family Betrayals," that would be it. And if she was still here, I think my grandpa would have never kicked us out of the house onto the streets and bounced to Mexico and think I would never have become the person I am today, but that's the past and I can't change that. Wish I could though.

Well I'm gonna end this here and say my final goodbye.

To my grandmother. GOODBYE! And I miss you! Well I'm out for now and I'll write some lines for you next time. Ghost!

**-Knuckles, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: You deliver another thoughtful and insightful on topic piece. We get the whole picture and we're sure many of us can empathize with you, maybe not on a such a level, but we definitely get it. We know your grandmother simply wants you to live a good life, and we're sure she has nothing but immense love for you and your family.*

### Fallen Soldier

My friend, my heart never wanted to say goodbye  
 Sit up late night all I can do is cry  
 Remembering our times and the time we bared  
 Hoping your life that they would have spared  
 I miss you soldier but life goes on  
 Now I write my heart out to y'all in this poem

I know that your spirits are somewhere good  
 Instead of not trippin' and leakin' around the hood  
 I say this is my last time losing a friend  
 But in the last five months I lost at least ten  
 My fallen soldiers I lost my friends  
 They all been publish in The Beat Within  
 I just lost one more to the streets  
 So I want to say my ninja Burget  
 May he Rest In Peace

**-Lil Mainey the Prince, Alameda**

*From The Beat: It's crazy - it really is like being in a war, we're sorry you had to lose so many people you cared about...we know nothing can ease that kind of pain, but thank you for writing their props for The Beat, because by writing it down, you remind all of us that these people who have died aren't just numbers, they are writers, dreamers, friends, loved ones. Gone but truly... not forgotten.*

### Changes

Changing is easy and hard. It all goes down to somebody's decision. Can't nobody change you. "Self decision" is up to you; you decide what needs to be changed about yourself. People can give you advice, give you therapy, tell you what's right, but at the end, you're the judge and shot caller of yourself. There's no excuses.

Of course I'm not saying it's easy to make decisions. You might want to change, but the things you do that are bad that you want to change you might love to do, and it'll be hard to change for the same reason you like it. For example, I love to get high by smoking weed. I want to stop smoking 'cause that's the right thing to do, but I love to get blown, and at the same time I want to stop 'cause it's the best thing for me. They could send me to therapy and send me to Narcotics Anonymous. They're going to tell me that smoking is bad and ruins people's life. They even going to try to encourage me to stop and tell me to follow the 12 steps. DUH! I already know it's bad and it ain't going to take me nowhere. You could encourage me and give me advice, but at the end it's up to me.

To all the boys and girls around, I hope you make the right choices, because can't nobody change you but you. God Bless y'all.

**-C-Los, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: You're right, C-Los. Unless you choose to change, all the advice in the world won't help you. At the same time, we want to encourage you to think about how change happens AFTER you make the choice to change. By this we mean that while a 12-step program may not offer you any information you don't already know, just being around a lot of other people who are trying to get out from under the same problem you are can be a source of strength, and can help you to succeed. As you make very clear, just knowing what is right and wrong is not enough to do the right thing. You have to want to do it, and the more people you can surround yourself with who also want to the right thing, the easier it is to do it!*

### Dreadlock Warriors

Pull, stretch, twist and lock  
Fiends approach him  
Just so they can twist the rock  
He kisses the block  
With his soul  
As the ticks on his clock  
Continue to go  
Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick...  
Standing on the same corner  
Waiting to die  
He believes in something  
That don't exist  
All because of pride  
All lies  
That his best friend told him  
Dreadlock Warrior  
Says he's lost his rocks  
But his best friend stole them  
Shooting dice  
With your life  
But who really rolled them?  
His poison  
Killed the old lady  
But Warrior  
Already knew it was him

**-Lil' Hedge Hog, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: This seems to describe a drug deal that went down wrong. And the writer's best friend lied on him and stole his stash, right? You have many mysterious allusions in your poem, one of which suggests that an old lady died from bad drugs. Drug dealing can cause people to become devious and dangerous, and, as you write, have evil consequences, such as best friends betraying each other and becoming enemies.*

### Now That Your Gone

You're in God's hands...  
I still ain't sure why I lost you...  
This pain can't and will never go away...  
The moment I heard I had you in me...  
My plans for the future completely changed...  
My plan was to walk away from all but you...  
The happiness in me couldn't be replaced...  
I was going to have my own baby...  
You were in my womb...  
You were feeding off of me...  
To be honest...  
I loved you from the start...  
Yeah, I'm young...  
But there was a purpose for you...  
I daydreamed all day of you...  
Your daddy might've walked away...  
But I didn't...  
Because my love for you was unconditional...  
Almost two months passed...  
And I heard the worst thing someone can hear...  
I had a miscarriage...  
There ain't no feelin'...  
No expression...  
No way...  
I can say how much it hurt me...  
I cried and cried...  
And still I cry...  
Because you would've almost been born...  
But it kills me inside to know...  
You no longer will be born...  
I know God and La Virgencita have you up above...  
I used to blame God for taking you from my life...  
But it's still taking me a while to realize that there was reason...  
For God to have you in His hands...  
I just want you to know...  
Mommy will always love you...  
You're on my mind all day and night...  
Mommy will always and forever miss you...  
My angel baby...  
Mi precioso Angelito...

**-Vaga, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: In this sad poem you have captured the heartbreak that every mother feels at the loss of her child. When we see your pain for losing a child you only knew in your mind and womb, we wonder just how so many mothers manage to keep going after their teenage children, whom they brought into the world in pain and sacrificed all their lives for, lose their lives to the stupidity that seems to govern our behavior. We're glad your faith gives you the strength you need to get beyond this personal tragedy, and we hope it gives you a new respect for every mother's child.*

### A Memorable Good-bye To my Dad

The worst experience I had was when my dad died. Before he died my dad had a warrant for his arrest so before he turn himself in he call me to his house and told me he had to go to jail and do his time and get it over with.  
The last word I told my dad was "See you soon and I love you." Four months later while he was in jail my dad had a real bad asthma attack and the guard wasn't able to get his inhaler or a medic, so he passed away and ever since then everything started going down hill.

**-Lil' Kease, Alameda**

*From The Beat: It takes a real man to stand up and turn around and turn himself in, and even more of a man to look his own son straight in the eye and tell him that this is his plan. It's enraging that your father died the way he did, but we hope you stand tall and proud for the courage with which he made his last decisions. That courage can help you make your way into a brighter future. Peace.*



### Dog Fights

I have never attended a dog fight in person but I have seen dogs fight and it's not really all that bad. It's like a boxer fighting another boxer. I mean it's wrong killing the dog after the fight, but not all dog fighters do that. I think dog fighting is wrong but then again I do not think it should be illegal.

I think it can be a legitimate way to make money. I think if it is a person's personal property they have the right to do what they want with it, whether it be wrong to some people or not. I think the real reason it's illegal is because the government can't collect taxes from it not because people think it's wrong.

If Vick was my partner I would tell him you shouldn't be fighting dogs because he already has all the money he needs and if he wants to see dogs fight to just watch the fights not participate in them.

I would tell him he is stupid for ruining his career that some could be willing to kill for.

**-John, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You make some really good points here, especially about the ways in which legality and taxability are so often connected. You argue like a lawyer, for real. However, do you really think it's the same as boxing? Dogs' characters are such that a lot of what they do is because of loyalty to their "masters" while boxers still have free will. They can walk any time they want to, while a dog has to fight to the death. Doesn't this "choice" aspect make a difference?

### Dog Fighting In Me

I got two dogs fighting inside of me.  
The rumble inside my body is impossible to see.  
I got two dogs fighting to the death.  
Sometimes I get too weak, struggling for a breath.  
The dogs that fight in me represent the good and the bad.

The times both happy and the sad.  
The dogs that are inside of my person,  
Cannot be terminated by any lethal injection,  
Not any deadly weapon.  
But if you took time to talk, to understand and actually see,  
There are truly two dogs fighting inside of me.

**-Giovanni, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We love your metaphor of fighting dogs to represent the struggle you are waging within yourself. If you were a betting man, which side would you bet to win this dogfight? We know which side we want to win, but that's us, not you.

### Pit Vs. Pit

This pit is called Chingon...  
He's the craziest dog there was...  
He growled at his enemy/enemies...  
Before the rowdiness started...  
Pit vs. pit...  
Before the fight...  
The pit got hyped up with...  
The beatings the owner gave him...  
Chingon had lashes on his back...  
Even before his fight...  
Money was bet on him already...  
Damn, at the end of all...  
Chingon was shot...  
Cold blooded...

Because half of his body was taken off of him...

**-Vaga, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** This is a brutal, but powerful poem about what it means to condition a dog to be a fighter. We think people do this to their dogs because they have no compassion for other living things, and maybe because it's their only form of control. Why do you think it happens?

### Guns Don't Kill People, People Kill People

It's easy to squeeze  
While we watch the devil do a striptease  
Standing on the side of our mind  
Tempting my flesh  
Tempting the rest  
As I watch the rest of my body  
Go into overdrive  
The genocide on our murders  
Is double homicide  
You might be the one  
To get the phone call  
Like, "We found your son's body  
By the rec hall  
Neck all bent up"  
The reporter says  
"He was just another gang member murdered"  
It's easy to pick up Smitty or Western  
And when you see  
You enemy  
But he really your brother  
You bless him  
And the devil  
Gave you the tool  
And told your flesh  
To test 'em  
Then you lay that tool down  
And rest 'em  
We think  
It's really Rest in Peace  
Man, it's really Rest in Pieces  
'Cause our brain and soul  
Was split into pieces  
Off of drugs  
With our cannons  
Like, who needs Jesus?  
The Messiah  
The Messiah I retired by soul to  
So my old became new  
And my new became new  
It's like I was short  
But never grew  
And these bullets  
Trying to chop down  
My hair doo  
Wanna kill my brain  
Because I stare at you  
Glare at who?  
But I really wanna share with you  
Knowledge from a boy soldier  
That was stolen from Africa  
Running from the white man  
While they howling out  
"I'm a capture you"  
I am just like the Rastafarians  
Except I don't believe in Jah  
I grew up on this wisdom weed  
Now I am accustomed  
To seeing people bleed  
Guns don't kill people  
People kill people  
Damn, Dark Side

**-Dark Side, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** A counselor was saying that he thought that every time a young black man shot at another boy who looked just like himself, it was like looking in the mirror and, essentially, killing himself. Do you think he is right? What do you think is the impulse for the murders in any community, regardless of color? Why are young people willing to risk their own lives and to kill each other? So what, in your opinion, is at the heart of the seemingly endless violence?

### The World

What's up with all the murders? All our black people dying and the government installs fear in us. I'm tired of these wars over religion—that's really what it's for, but they hide it. I'm tired of being lost in this ghetto that we believe is a fame of some sort. I'm tired of these skeletons in they suits stealing our dreams; I just wanna be equal, like everybody else. I just want a black leader for once, that doesn't get assassinated 'cause he's tryna do it. I just wanna know what the world would be like if there weren't drugs and guns involved. I wanna know what's God's plan for why all the innocent people die and none of the murderers and crooks? I wanna know why and how they brainwashed us. I wanna know why they divide us into higher class/middle class/lower class? I wanna know if AIDS was really created by a person or whether it was really a disease that somebody caught? I feel like how come a black kid gets murdered and the police is not quick to come, but if it was a white person, the police would know who did it, what they did, how they did it.

I wanna know why we disrespect our women and why we're such cowards to take care of our children? I wonder why our black fathers leave their sons to grow up to be monsters, why we so quick to pull the trigger? And if whites didn't do nothin' to us, why, when we step into a room, they fear us? Why is 50% of the men in jails African American? Why we so easily influenced by these rappers that we think are cool? Why can't we all be treated fairly?

This is how I feel about the world and everything in it. I have to change my thoughts and change my surroundings in order to survive. This the blender that they put me in.

**-Dark Side, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You're asking all the right questions. Novelist and essayist James Baldwin once wrote about why he thought that black men disrespect their women. He wrote that white men in general have the economic, political and social power, and are reluctant to hire black men in good jobs, although they more often will hire black women, and out of frustration and shame that black men can't provide for their families mostly merely because of their color, they take it out on their women and sometimes their children. What do you think?

### The Fog Swallowed The Child

Look at our history...pathetic  
Full of misery  
White man hatin' on the world  
An' everything in it  
But we all bounced back  
And tried to spin it  
Creating nothing  
But conditional love  
For each other  
An' can't even love  
Without payin' the other  
Didn't matter  
If it was a full-grown man  
Or a four-foot child  
You a colored man  
They'll leave you in the cold  
An' wild  
The fog swallowed the child  
And made him disappear  
This haze coverin' their eyes  
Seems like he was never there  
Just a figment of their imagination  
Like a picture  
With no lamination  
An' got soaked  
But this all just history, folks  
But history seems to bring  
Itself back up  
If it doesn't  
It's pure dumb luck

**-Lil' Hedge Hog, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** When you think about how events are moving today, do you see other races emerging in various areas? Becoming educated, skillful, experienced, wise, successful, dominant? Do you think that some day people from all races will have amazing achievements, so that the question of what race people belong to will no longer matter, because everybody will know that people from any race can and do excel?

### Pain

People have a sacred spot  
It shows up deep within  
Some people don't feel anything  
They're the ones  
Doin' life in the pen

Well, me, I do have that sacred spot  
That's in front of the judge  
That's when he tells me  
I'm not getting out  
Then I begin to tense up  
I wanna throw punches  
Start cryin'  
Rip my hair out my head  
But, still, I stay calm  
And fall asleep in my bed

Like blood coming out my eyes  
I no longer care  
Suicide's around the corner  
Like a blind man seeing a glare  
Will it happen? Will it not?  
Please, God, set me free  
Feeling my crying wolves  
Biting own on their teeth  
'Til they bleed

They say it ain't shhh  
But that shhh's takin' up my time  
For drinking that juice  
That falls from the bloody vein

Moms don't cry  
Pops don't cry  
That means everything's good  
They tell me they miss me  
But I don't even miss my 'hood  
I have nothin' to care for  
Please just throw me in my room  
I don't plan on wakin' up next day  
My body will no longer consume

Hope all goes well for you  
Hope you enjoy this reading  
Next time you fin me  
You won't  
'Cause I will be bleeding

**-Swol, Marin**

**From The Beat:** This is the most heart breaking, profound, sad and tragic poem you've ever written. You're already home now, so we hope your freedom will help staunch your pain. You write that you think that your parents don't cry. Do you mean you believe they don't care that you're gone, that you're in juvy? That they don't love you? Why wouldn't they? How do you feel about them? What has happened with your homies in your 'hood, that you don't miss them anymore? If there is a doctor, the med tec in Marin juvy, an adult you trust to talk to, please get whatever help you need. We here at The Beat miss you a lot and hope your being home will bring you happiness.

### Revenge

Revenge is like a poison slowly consuming you with a passion. At first it approaches you with warmth and comfort, slowly working its way to your mind. It tells you it wasn't your fault. It blames the other person.

Your subconscious tells you no, but it's too late. That dark and sneaky snake has spread its venom in your mind. Now you are under its will, just following the dark steps. Nothing to do now but obey it's will. Your mind has become consumed with venom, that venom called revenge.

**-John, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Wow John, this is powerful writing. Is there an antidote for this poison. We know there is, but we wonder what you think.



## The Day I Let My Dog Fight

So I got a pit. It was a bundle pit.

As it got bigger it had a mean savage look, so I decided to put chains on him to get him cut then who knows maybe I will see some other dog walking in the street and cut my pit loose and see who wins.

He been on chains for many weeks and ate food with eggs. Man he was big.

So one day I take him for a walk and guess what? I see a pit, so I cut mine loose before he charges and gets my dog first. They go at it for a couple seconds. All of a sudden you hear a squeal and blood everywhere on the floor. I check which one is a goner and take off with my dog running home before the owner comes out to see his dog's neck chewed on.

When I got home it ran through my mind what if I got caught. I did what I wanted to do, and now I knew how it felt to make your dog fight. But for what, to kill another dog.

**-Eightpack, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Man, this is an intense story. Especially because it sounds like you regretted it after it happened. Do you still have that dog? What happened to him? Would you ever fight a dog again?

*I have noticed that I have been puttin' my mom and dad in pain and stress. I just wanted to just top it off that I know what I have been doing is wrong,*

## Young Man

I don't want my family to see locked up.

This is a young man I don't want to see coming back in here.

This is a young man that wants to have a successful life style.

I'm a young man that need to turn his life around.

I want to be that young man to have his own million-dollar business and his own hundred thousand dollar home right a-long with my family.

This is a young man that wants to inspire other young men to change and be just like me or better, and make the right choices and stay out of jail because it's too many young men in jail, especially black men. Because don't nobody care to see you in here they see you and all they see is just a paycheck, that's it. After they leave here they don't care about nobody that's locked up. Everybody on the outs -- to them we're dead!

You think they're thinking about you right now, but probably the only time they'll think about you is when a police car pass by that's it. But if they hear their song came on the radio, shhh they ain't thinking of you!

They'll probably think when they get a bottle and pour you a shot. I'm saying all this because my O-G cousin told me the G.A.M.E should be told not sold, so when you get out down, whatever it takes to stay out alright then peace out until next time I'm just a young ninja trying to give ya'll some G.A.M.E.

**-Young Man, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You could be a real leader in the city if you manage to follow through on these promises you've made here - especially because you see underneath the surface of things to try and uncover the real truth. The world needs more people like that! But how will you make these changes? Break down your plan, we're ready to hear it!

## Slowly Dying

Every breath I take

Is a little bit harder

I went from breathing

To feeling like I'm wheezing

Every time I blink

My eyes stay shut a little bit longer

Why is the world so bright

If it's midnight?

It must be the light

At the end of the tunnel

It would be easier

To just give up

But I keep on fightin'

I'm a just keep doin' this thing

Called life

I'm a give it one last shot

**-Birdman, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Every week your writing becomes more original, personal and profound. We, admire your determination never to give up.

## My Crazy Life

Ever since I was young, I have been going through many hard things. My mom been through many rough times. My fatha been trying so hard to put food on the table, but something would always happen. I ain't tryin' to say he is a failure I think he a good father, but especially my mom.

My mom was the most wonderfulest mother in my whole life. I know she is the greatest, but I know she wasn't the best. But I know she always been there for me when my head was down.

But right now it been all bad. I've been been smokin' on weed, chillin' with my friends, going on the run... that's some bs. I have noticed that I have been puttin' my mom and dad in pain and stress. I just wanted to just top it off that I know what I have been doing is wrong, and all I wanted just to say I was sorry. Anyways, I hope moms and pops, you guys could forgive me.

Sincerely, Yo' Son

**-Sonic, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Of course your mom and dad can forgive you. That's what moms and dads do. But it sure is going to make that forgiveness much easier when it comes after an apology like this for putting them through it. Thinking about others is the beginning of real maturity, the beginning of a process that is turning you from an irresponsible boy into a responsible man. Just keep thinking about how much your parents have done and continue to do for you, and you'll know just how much you owe them.

## I Just Feel This Way

Live or die

A state of mind

Free soon

It takes some time

To get me mines

A wall of lies

I close my eyes

I try to hide

A troubled mind

It's like I'm blind

I'm tired of trying

Buying

And lying

My soul is dying

**-Cesar, Marin**

**From The Beat:** Excellent poem! How else can you get you yours besides doing whatever you do that's illegal? Whatever it is you do that's messed up, it sounds like it's causing you to lie and playing with your mind, so it seems like your mind is telling you it wants you to stop torturing it.

## A Memorable Good-bye

Six years ago in 2001, my uncle passed away. My uncle had asthma and he was drinking liquor. After he drank the liquor, a couple minutes later, he fell down on the steps. I was at my cousin's house at the time. My uncle, aunts and other relatives were cooking crawdads. We little kids didn't get to go. When I heard my favorite uncle was dying I ran bare-footed to where he was at. I was running with a few of my cousins. The house was about 15-20 minutes away. I didn't get to say good-bye to him until the funeral.

We used to go do a lot of family road trips while he was alive to have fun, but now our family is doing their own thang. I even got an R.I.P tattooed on me. R.I.P Uncle, with all my heart. We all miss you and love you very, very much. We know your up there watching us from heaven. You will always be in our hearts.

**-Attitude, Santa Clara**

**From the Beat:** This sounds like such an intense memory, which you detail here so clearly - I can really see all the cousins running over to the house in fear. It seems like after your uncle passed away, your relationship with your extended family changed. Why do you think that is?

## Cry Myself To Sleep

Hey Beat, this is Young T-Face again writing The Beat to let out my emotions. Lately when I'm in my bed at night I quietly cry myself to sleep, thinking about why did I do that stupid crime.

**-Young T-Face, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** One thing for sure - you're not alone. Sometimes it feels like the buildings in The Hall are kept up by tears and sorrow. The real thing is to keep letting those emotions out and then find a way to make sure you never come back! Keep your head up, and Peace.

## This Is Justice

Justice, to me, means doing the right thing, or doing what is correct in our society. Justice can be served when someone is sentenced for a crime. But sometimes people are sentenced in an unjust way. If you harm someone, justice does not require for you to be harmed. You should be punished, but sometimes you are harmed, too. The justice system provides some form of justice, but it can be very unjust, too. In the past, there have been many incidents in our country of unjust treatment, like Rodney King, for instance. The justice system should be allowed to handle punishment, but not when it is not 100% sure.

**-Joe, Santa Cruz**

**From The Beat:** Thanks, Joe. This is a thoughtful piece. How would you go about improving the system to get it closer to being 100% sure?

## Soft...

What is soft? I was under the impression it was something like gentle or delicate things that make you feel good or comfortable. But there are many words that have been used in different meanings. But this word "soft" is my topic because it's now considered weak, feminine. To tell you the truth, there were a couple incidents where people have called me soft. But I know that life is something I make, not others. Gotta Go.

**-Halo, San Francisco**

**The Beat Within:** It takes a courage that those who call you soft do not have or know to write a piece like this in this place. We admire you. Forget what others call you. You know who you are and what you want out of your life, and you are finally on the right track to get it. Don't let those who think they're hard (a child's desire) push you down.

## RIP J. Lee

A lot of times, I wish I would've had the chance to say good-bye to my brother. Early on, we weren't that cool and I didn't really like him that much... But after a little bit, I started kicking it with him more and more and we became like good friends. He taught me a lot of things about how to make money, loyalty and hooked me up with everything he had right down the middle.

Me and him were real close and I was kicking it with him everyday. But at the end, a lot of stupid little things like money and girls got in the way and we got into a fight and then he jacked me and stabbed me in the back. I was so pissed off I swore if I ever saw him again I would kill him. It turns out a couple of weeks later I found out he died in some accident.

Even though we had beef before he died, I still wish I had a chance to chill out and not let all the stupid stuff get in the way and so we could've ended on a good note before he passed. I regret being selfish about small things, being stubborn and all the drama over nothing. But at least now I know not to take anything, especially life, for granted and to not to let stupid things get in the way of what's really important.

**-Chino, Santa Clara**

**From the Beat:** What a great lesson to keep in mind for the rest of your life. All these stories about remembering those who have passed really keep emphasizing how much we learn through these losses. Even though death is so hard, it is what makes life precious.

## Things That Make Hearts Break

Pretty smiles

Deceiving laughs

People who dream with their eyes open

Unanswered cries

And souls who have given up hoping

The other thing that breaks hearts

are fairy tales that never come true

And selfish people who lie to me,

selfish people just like you.

**-Smiley, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Short, sweet and to the point. This poem is kind of making our own hearts break.

## I've Been To A Dog Fight

The first time I ever been to a dogfight was at my old hood. It was an ugly fight. The dogs were biting each other's necks and tearing at each other's noses and everything - there was blood leaking everywhere. It was a nasty experience. There was this one time I was watching a fight down the street across from my apartment. It was some Samoan folk and some Cambodian folk.

My uncle - who is Cambodian - was watching his dog and the Samoan guy's dog fighting until my uncle's dog was dead on the ground and he had to pay up. He came up short and the Samoan was beating him up until he was almost dead and the police came. People were all running away but they eventually got caught. So yeah, they should make this a crime because its messed up seeing dogs die and because people could get killed over this.

If I was Vick's homie I would tell him to stop 'cause he don't need to be doing this. He already is making enough money.

**-Family, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This piece is interesting because it shows dog fighting is something that transcends culture. You really give a vivid picture of the goriness of a dog fight.

## Uncles And Brothers

I had to say good-bye to my three uncles when I was just a lil' kid. That was my mom's only brothers. Now she has a sister. I didn't really know about death, so it didn't really hit me till I grew up.

I hate to see my mom cry on their birthday and the day they passed away. We all go to the funeral and say our prayers and respects. My mom always tell us stories about them good times and bad times. Now, as I get older, I get to memorize more and more about them. It's a trip 'cause I always think to myself.

"If my uncles was still alive, I wonder what we would do and talk about."

I got two brothers, and I hope nothing won't happen to them because I would go crazy without them. I'm always with them, good times and bad times. I hope I don't go through the bad times my mom did in her past.

**-Smokey, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** When you think about how hard it would be for you to lose your own brothers, then you begin to understand the pain your mother carries with her. You're lucky you're getting to know them through your mom's stories about them. We'd love for you to share one or more of those stories with The Beat.

## Sad Good-Byes

I remember when I said my good-byes.

I had rivers of tears coming down my eyes.

It was hard for me to say my farewells.

I remember this, as my eyes begin to swell.

I'm deep in thought, about the times we shared

Remembering when you were sick but you were still there.

I remember when we held your funeral,

Everybody was in tears, even after your burial.

Even now thinking of you I begin to cry,

Reminiscing on that very sad good-bye.

**-Giovanni, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Even though we don't know who you were crying over or what the circumstances, we do know the pain you felt, because you express it so well. Have the tears that you've shed led you to think any differently about how you live your life, or how you want to live it?

## A Memorable Goodbye

On Sept. 6, 2006 I didn't get to say goodbye to my sister-in-law Blanca. It was very painful - the fact that I was the one to tell my man his sister just passed away. It hurts me to see my man hurting so much. He wasn't able to say goodbye to her.

All I know is that she has taken a big part of my man with her. I've lost Blanca and my man. He has changed so much that I feel he's gone with her.

Yes, I'm very hurt because I'm not with that happy, outgoing person I met on 5-20-05. Half of him is no longer with me.

This has been the 1st funeral I've ever gone to and I never imagined how sad and ugly a feeling it is to lose someone close to you.

That is my biggest fear - to lose another person close to me. It would crush my heart - too painful and unreal at the time, and hard to overcome it. But I just hope to die before my loved ones.

**-Eva, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Grieving is a process, and it takes longer for some to return to 'normal' than for others. It is possible that your man needs some help with his grieving. He may need to talk with someone who understands the process. Perhaps you could ask your counselors for some advice. They may be able to point you in the right direction so that you can help your friend to heal. You, too, need some healing. This kind of a loss isn't something you 'get over'. It's something you learn to live with.

## A Memorable Good-Bye

In our life, sometimes things can get hard and it really takes us apart. The hardest time of my life was to see one of the people I know pass away. It's like there's these days that you were with them, spending time together.

You think everything is all good, but then a day comes and someone tells you that someone close to you just past away. I try to deny the truth because it hurts but the truth comes out and hits me. It is hard to see someone you know resting in peace because not only you, but others suffer too.

The tears that are shed can't bring them back but it brings back the memories we have of that person. Sometimes I wish that I was back in the past when I was hanging out with that person but, like everything, they come and go so I just keep my head up and keep going on.

**-L, Santa Clara**

**From the Beat:** It's truly amazing how painful death is for those who have been left behind. There is this book called "The Tibetan Book of the Dead," which is a spiritual guide to those who have passed away. There are lots of interesting rituals and tips in this book for those dealing with loss. You should check it out.

## Case Closed

What's really good wit' da Beat? Man, ya boy feeling himself right 'bout now .The DA and da judge finally got on my side and dropped my case. Now I'm in process of getting out and stayin' out. I'm 'bout to be all 'bout ma dough as soon as I get out. But I'm probably gone have to go to da grouper and knock it out.

Fa real I need to stop runnin' so I can get off probation 'cause when a ninja off probation then I don't gotta worry 'bout no police, no mo' bein' paranoid. Just get on wit' ma life and outta da system

**-Young Bunte, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Congratulations! We have nothing but positive thoughts to send you on your way — and the hope that the promises you make here you will be able to keep. When you say you're about to be "all 'bout dough," we get worried, because we know where the money chase can lead. Getting off probation is a great liberation, but the only way it means no more police and no more paranoia is if you don't give the police any more reasons to target you. What are your plans after the grouper?

## Money Can't Buy Happiness...

My mother told me she was diagnosed with cancer. I really wish God would help my mom and I know He will. But I had a conversation with her and I told her I was going to get out and give my money every week, in my opinion, to make her happy. But not really thinking about, she told me, "I don't care about money. I care about you and you doing good, staying out of trouble." My mom and auntie then said to me. "MONEY COMES AND GOES, BUT MY SON AND DAUGHTERS DON'T!"

It really touched me because my mom really cares about and loves me. I now have a goal to do, because if my mom goes, I would want her to go with memories of me doing good instead of me doing bad. Money can't buy happiness. Best wishes to my mom.

**-Halo, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We also wish your mom the best, but we can see that she already has the best in you. So many young men think that if they buy their mothers a house or jewels or things, that will make up for the pain they have caused. You understand something much more profound, and that is that material things are easy to get, while each individual is a unique and precious gift of infinite worth, and totally irreplaceable. There is no greater gift than the one you want to give your mother. And, by wanting it, you have already given her a great gift. Don't let the temptations of the street deter you from doing what is right.



## Good-Bye Dad...

Before I start this, I want to tell you guys about your parents or most people's parents. That is to spend every time you can with them as if it was the last because you will never know when they are going to leave and not even able to even say their last words. This happened on the first day of my summer school, and I just got released out of the ranch the day before.

My sister came out screaming, and I ended up finding my father laying dead right in his bedroom floor. Never even had the chance to say my last "I love you, Dad" or my farewell goodbyes to him. This just seem to happen so fast, still don't really believe he's gone.

Before all this he would always want me to spend time with him, my uncle and cousin to go fishing, but I always refused because me and my boys always had some place to just kick it at. My dad loved fishing. Before, when we used to go, I was so happy seeing how happy he gets when he catches a fish.

I regret so much for not spending enough time with him or having that better father and son relationship. So this is a memorable good-bye to you, Dad. I love you and hoping to be your son again in the next life. A'ight Beat, I'm out!

**-Viet Ox, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This is a touching tribute to your father. How did he die? When did this happen? The love between a parent and a child is the most powerful of all, and the pain of losing a parent never really goes away, even though it gets easier to take after time. Are you living the kind of life that your dad wanted you to live? It seems to us that would be the best tribute you could pay to him.

## My Way Of Thinkin'

I'm about me. That's a question folks need to ask themselves — what you about? Me, I can give a damn about a set. I ride for nothing but family and money. Ya know I go to all-out war for my fam. It's an eye for an eye.

When I say fam, I don't mean every person that has my blood running through them. It's only certain folks I keep in my circle. I don't trust my whole family and I don't love my whole family. I mean I care for them, but I don't love them, if that makes any sense. I will only kill for the chosen few in my circle.

Now when it comes to money, that's my main thing, so its murder season. I mean shhh, that's what I live for. Play with my money it's like playin' with my life. That's how I see it. You cannot really live without money. Everything in this world revolve around money and require money. The only things that don't require money is love and friendship. I don't really care too much about having friends.

So that's what it is with me. family and money. Everything else is irrelevant. Everything else don't matter — no blocks, no friends, no homies, no broads... (maybe my female). I mean I love my female and that's all I need is one. I don't need hell of them. That shhh just too stressful. I love my chosen family circle, money, and my "Lady." What's poppin' Momi?

**-P. Crook, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We gave you a Co-POW not because we agree with your way of thinking, but because you explained it so well, and we appreciate that. If you're going to quote the Bible ("an eye for an eye,") why not also quote that part of it which says, "The love of money is the root of all evil." Or, are you one of those Christian samplers who takes what you want out of the Book, and ignores the rest? We're not sure what brought you here, but whatever it was, you're doing absolutely nothing for that "family circle" you love, or that lady that you need. And money? You're stacking it all right, but it's going into the pockets of your keepers. Does this make sense to you? (And yes, it DOES MAKE SENSE that you can care for family members without loving them. We've got some family like that, too...)

## Trust

In this cold ass world  
 Who can you trust?  
 Do yo' girl really love you  
 Or is it just lust?  
 Doin' time make you think  
 Or do it make yo' brain shrink?  
 Complicated and "gang related"  
 Police keep me in these halls  
 I ain't trippin'  
 In a few days  
 I'll be out of these walls  
 They get me messed up  
 They keep a ninja in a mug  
 So when they ask me  
 "Who did it?"  
 My shoulders I shrug  
 Refuse to be a snitch  
 My blood way too thick  
 I need to go to the hospital  
 Ya boy hella sick  
 But doctors and police  
 Only want one thing  
 Scrilla, paypa, money that green  
 In this cold world  
 Ain't no one you can trust  
 Ain't tryin' to get a TRG  
 So I keep it on the hush  
 It's getting hella close  
 Almost end of the week  
 So I'm a post in my room  
 And wait for The Beat

**-Jordan, Marin**

**From The Beat:** You ask a whole lot of profound questions, which are amazing as well as sad. What has your young life been like, that you're skeptical about whether people, including girls, are being sincere or just playing? Do you think there are no police or doctors you can trust? What about your parents?

## Gone Before I Knew It

Q-vole beaters? It's that one sexy Chingon Travieso coming at you from the max unit once again. Well, I'm going to write about saying good-bye and how hard it is to say those two words. But sometimes we don't get that chance to say it.

Let me tell you a short story about a time I didn't get to say those two words to a loved one. It all started one night when my uncle came to my house. You couldn't tell that anything was wrong with him. He seemed himself, eating dinner, talking, telling jokes and having fun, until he left my pad. He left a good memory in my mind of him that night.

But before I knew it, we were getting a phone call by SJPd saying that if someone could go to ID my uncle because they have him in his home because he committed suicide, I couldn't believe it because he was just here about four hours ago, and now they're telling me that he's dead. I would never forget that night. I never got to say those two words that hurt too much to say.

Well Beat, I'm running out of time, so I'll cut this one here. So until next time, I'm out. Alrato.

**-Travieso, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Wow, Travieso. This only confirms what we already know, which is that whatever is going on on the surface, there are things we can never know about people that are going on inside. We're very sorry your uncle committed suicide. That decision freed him from whatever pain was too much to bear, but it left others who loved him in their own pain. We're glad that your last memory of him is such a pleasant one.

## I'm Retiring From This!

Seven times that I've been through this,  
I got to ring on my buzzer just so I could take a piss.  
Man this hall life ain't the life for me,  
But I keep coming back so I guess it must be,  
Sure they recognize me when I come back,  
don't even know my first name, for all they know I could  
be Jack.  
Man I'm done with this shhh & I'm talking 'bout for  
good.  
I'ma listen to my moms & I'ma do what I should.  
I'ma retire from this, I'm gone, I'm dismissed  
Ain't finna pull an MJ and come back times three.  
Fool when I'm talkin' bout all this I'm fo' real:  
no shooting, no fighting and I'm not gonna steal.

**-Marcus, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Marcus, this poem bristles with rage and determination... we hope you keep it, hold on to it, and remember it like it's tattooed on your heart. Also... while you're in the hall, why not talk to a cool staff (we know there are some!) and ask for suggestions about how you can find support for your new life on the outs?

## Gangs

There's gangs everywhere you go  
No matter where you at or where you from  
No matter if you're black, white, brown, or any other  
color  
People can't stop others from being in a gang with their  
friends  
They not gonna listen, they don't care what good advice  
you got to tell  
But once they get locked up, over and over, they start to  
recognize  
They start to think where their life is headed  
And start to think they want to change their life around  
But once they get out they go back to the same habits as  
before  
I guess that's the way it is -- in a world full of gangs.

**-Rr, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** If hood sickness is a disease, then you just wrote a classic diagnosis of how it breaks down a person's health - his freedom, his hopes, sometimes even his life... now we ask you - is there a cure? Is there a way to help people in gangs find a better way to live? Especially in terms of keeping those bad habits from kicking back in, especially if someone has had time on lockdown to understand that the price is just too high?

## Losing The One I Love To A Group Home

The new path that I am walking I must walk alone.  
I must take baby steps 'til I'm full grown.  
And done with my 12 months in my temporary home.  
Fairytales don't always have happy endings.  
Like the little schoolmate in the schoolyard will play  
jacks and uno cards,  
I'll be your best friend and you'll be my valentine.  
We'll be playmates and lovers and share out secret  
worlds.  
But it's time for me to go to my group home and leave  
you alone.  
I hope you know, that this has nothing to do with you.  
It's personal - myself and I - we've got some straighten'  
out to do with the law.  
I'll miss you like a child misses his blanket.  
But in the end we'll be together, one mind, one soul, one  
body, and one heart.

**-Vader, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Hey Vader, do you know that song called "We'll Be Together Again". Your grandfathers would know it. Billie Holiday has a great version of it. Tell your girlfriend to look it up.

## My Goodbye

I didn't get to see you in  
The hospital  
I didn't know the password to  
Say goodbye  
Your mom was being shady  
Keeping you hidden  
I miss you bro, don't ever forget that  
You're my solid soldier for eternity  
You're always going to be a part of me,  
Forever in my heart  
I love you bash!!  
Goodbye goodbye  
I really miss my homie even though you're gone away.  
I know you're in a better place  
And I hope to see you someday  
How could it be somebody  
Took my boy from me, my bestfriend's  
Gone. Now I'm so all alone!!  
RIP Bash G

**-Sarah, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We hear so many sad stories like yours. They break our hearts, too. And the saddest of all are the needless losses, the deaths that come from violence, the deaths that are intentional. You have heard this one before, but it is still true. Time is the greatest healer in these matters. In the meantime, cry when you feel like it. Let your emotions out and talk about your losses with friends.

*I Hold The  
Beat Within*

## Life In The Dark

As I walk through the dark side  
It's a scary, heartbreaking ride  
My blood pumpin' twice as harder  
I wonder if I can make it up the ladder  
Everyone is pressuring me to do the best  
But I feel a cold spot in my chest  
I think I'm just close to the edge  
That tryin' to push me off the ledge  
I won't let it happen, that's going out too easy  
Stopping now will make me look lazy  
The heart in me is beginnin' to pump like crazy  
Everything is passin' through my mind too fast  
It's a horror movie that's always going to last  
Sometimes I wonder if it's ever going to be over  
But my peers keep my head from getting lower  
They help me from tearing apart and losing my head  
Then the cold sweat woke me up from the horror movie  
in bed  
This seems to happen every time I'm unconscious  
It's a dream that keeps me in my cautions

**-Chuccy, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** If this is a dream, then something is wrong in your life to have it. If it's not a dream, but your own real life "horror movie," then you're the director, the one in charge, the one who can make the action anything you choose. So tell us, what do you choose?

## Lost

Don't know what to do  
But do what yo' potnas do  
Try to make money so you  
Did what the OG's did, sell some dope  
And hit some licks  
Hustle for that paper  
To keep the money rollin'  
Now you fell off and  
You in something stolen  
Now you think it's all easy  
So you find yourself robbing  
You get away, so you think  
It's all good --then you get  
Drunk and rob a store  
It was sloppy and then  
You was caught  
Sleeping in a room with walls of rock  
Lost and found by the system.

**-Elisi, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Great, dark piece. We almost wanted to switch up the end of this to say *Found*, and then *Lost* by the system, because it seems like after people get caught, it's harder to keep from coming back... do you think that will happen to you? Or do you have a plan to stay out for real?

## A Memorable Goodbye

For better or worse, all of us have had to say goodbye to someone close and dear. When I said goodbye I cried, because it was someone who I thought shouldn't have died.

My aunt was only 54 when she died. She was someone who saw me get in trouble, but she loved me for who I was. She knew I was in a gang, and did drugs, but it never stopped her from loving me.

I wish she was still here. But when I went to the hospital, they had to make the hardest choice. And that was to let her go. She was on life support and the only way to live was with a machine. The whole family was there, and said their last goodbyes, and then she died.

**-Clero, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** That's a hard story to write. We thank you for sharing it with us. We think maybe you've learned something important from your aunt. Do good. Confirm the faith she had in you.

## Goodbye

On March 28th I had to say goodbye to my best friend Edgar. He was a good friend. He was only 15 years old. He was killed by gang members. I never really got to say goodbye to him when he was alive. Once we had his rosary. I was there since it began at 1:00pm until it ended at 9:00pm. As I was there I saw all of our friends go up to the coffin and just look at him and think about the good time they used to have. I had a good time with him, even though he is not here physically he will always be in my heart and thoughts. No matter what, I will always love him and miss him a lot. Rest In Peace Edgar Ricardo Martinez. April 12, 1991 until March 28, 2007.

**-Payasa, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We are so sorry for you and for Edgar's family and friends. This is madness - young people killing one another. How would you bring this madness to an end? Where did this crazy idea start? Look around you in the hall. So called enemies have so much in common. Whichever gang you affiliate with, the chances are that your parents are struggling to make ends meet. The chances are that things are tough at home and that your community needs more jobs and good schools. It's time to unite around higher goals and real needs. Time to heal yourselves and your communities. Who will be brave enough to tell the truth. Your real enemies are poverty and lack of opportunity. As long as you mistakenly identify the real enemy, the real enemy wins, and your friends will keep dying, for no good reason.

## Remember!

I remember when I used to play cops and robbers  
I never knew that one day I would be running from the  
real cops

I remember when I would kiss my girl

I miss those moments

I remember like it was yesterday

Ma baby daughter was just born

Now she's five months

Time flies

I hope the time I gotta do flies

As fast as those months did

I remember chilling at my house

Making food for my girl

I miss my daughter

I remember when I used to carry her in my arms

I wouldn't want no one to mistreat her

Because that would get me mad

I gotta stay strong during all this

Because I need to stop all the bullshhhh I was doing

So when I return from placement

I'll be a better man to my girlfriend

And a better son to my mom

And the best father to my baby daughter

**-Oscar, Marin**

**From The Beat:** Will having a daughter you love so much give you the strength to not mess up any more when you're free again? Your young daughter needs you now! When you're free again, how will you be a father to her?

## Dear Lord

I know I ain't as faithful as I should be

I know I don't pray as much as I could

See, sometimes I feel that it's enough when I say, "I believe"

Lord, you said if I ask, I shall receive

So I ask in your darling son Jesus' name

That you remove my pain

And put your blood inside my veins

You give me blessing after blessing

Mercy to no end

Father God, I pray my soul to heaven

Is what you will send

You said, be more like you

And that's rather hard to do

But with your help

I will surely get through

My trials and tribulations

My times of need

God, I'm a hungry young man

But suppress my greed

The devil is a liar

And the truth is in you

Father God, bring me closer to you

Let us not dissipate

Lord, help me understand my calling

I was running from you

Procrastinating and stalling

But now I fully understand

That you have a helping hand

From now on, by that

Is where I stand

**-Mystery Man, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You constantly surprise your Beat readers with your writings. You come at us with so many tones, subjects, even attitudes. You have a humble and grateful heart. We hope your God hears your prayers.



## Last Time Here

Hey Beat, what's good? Me, I'm having a stressful time. Today is my daughter's birthday, she's turning one. It's really hard for me to miss her first birthday. But I think that this will push me and inspire me to do good so I won't miss her birthday next year. I'm gonna do my program for my little angel.

I love her more then words can explain. And I'm gonna be a good father to her. I refuse to let her grow up without her daddy. This is my last time here, for real. This is a painful time for me right now, but I'm gonna keep it solid and stay strong so I can be there with my baby girl as soon as possible. I love you Julia, daddy misses you.

**-Jake**

**From The Beat:** You probably have a million reasons why it's hard to change - habits, stress, old friends, etc... - but it sounds like you have a bright star that is the biggest reason of all to change as soon as you can! We hope you get back to be with your Julia soon. Peace.

## Goodbye to My Dad

A memorable good-bye I remember is the last time I said bye to my dad. I remember spending the whole day wit' my dad, man u know, doin' the usual thang, chillin'. Then it was time for me to go back home so he took me home.

So I told him "bye," thinking I was going to be able to see him the next day, but what happened next is what made it not possible, for some reason I woke up in the middle of the night. I seen my mom crying and she told me that my dad had got shot 10 times. For some reason I didn't believe her and & called my grandma and she told me it was true and I started to cry. Then the next day I had to try to stay strong for my mom and grandma, ever since then I realized that you should always let people know how you really fill about them, 'cause you never no when they're gonna be gone.

**-Lil' Mikey**

**From The Beat:** The lesson you describe is one of the most valuable in life, but don't worry, your father knew how much you loved him, and we bet the most important thing on his mind was him hoping that YOU knew how much he loved YOU. What is your favorite memory of him, the one you turn to when you're feeling bad?

## Come On Now, Vick!

What do I think about dog fighting?

I think that it is wrong because it is a sad thing to look at. They could be fightin' until one starts bleeding or gets injured and it may even come to death. I have never attended a dog fight, but I can picture one, and it is not a good thing to think of.

I think that it should and shouldn't be considered a crime. One because if the dog is owned by the owner then it is their property, so they could do whatever they want with it. The reason I think it should be a crime is because it is wrong and dogs are living organisms just like us.

How would you feel if you were owned and your owner made you fight w/ somebody else for money? There are other ways to make money and this is not one of their ways, I would tell Vick that he is stupid because he's already rich from football and he messed up his career for an illegal dog-fighting operation.

What's the point when you're already rich? Come on now Vick!

**-Lucky Hoang**

**From The Beat:** You should really consider being a lawyer one day - because you just hit on the exact legal question behind this problem, which is, how should people be required to treat their property, if that property is a living thing? That's the legal question - and then there is the moral question: Is it fair to make money off of someone else's suffering?

## Dog Fight

I think Michael Vick is very dumb for getting involved in dog fights, I ain't gon knock his hustle, but my mom always told me if you gon' do something be the best at it. So something happened in his organization that wasn't cool -- but hey if that's his way of getting money let the ninja get it, ball until he fall.

**-Twin**

**From The Beat:** One thing you leave out here is the dogs. Do you think he was treating the dogs fairly? Or to make the question more general... if your "hustle" is one that causes suffering, that hurts people, isn't it the wrong thing to do, even if you don't get caught?

## Dog Fighting is a Crime, But Should Vick Get the Time?

I think dog fighting is not a good thing but I don't think Mike Vick should go to jail for six years. Dog fighting is a crime and if he is guilty he will have to pay for it, but i don't think he should go to jail for six years. I think it should be a crime because it is still a living species, so yeah it should be crime.

**-Lil' Rich**

**From The Beat:** What do you think the punishment should be? Should he serve any time? Should he pay a fine? What about his career? Should he be allowed to continue to play? Let us know more about your thoughts on this!

## Can't Wait

What's up I can't wait till get out so I could go to the block and kick it with the homies from the hood and smash on our enemies and kick it and sip on some forties with the homeboys.

I can't wait till I get out to be on the streets but I got to wait for my time to be out.

**-Jaime**

**From The Beat:** One of the hardest part about working for The Beat is when you see people you like and care about coming back to jail again and again. Reading this piece makes us think you are going to come back, because it sounds like you're heading straight for the life that brought you here in the first place? Why would you ever want to come back to jail?

## Adrenalin Rush

On the outs I couldn't wait for something to jump off. I'm not like most people who fiend for drugs just to get high. I fiend for a fight, to jump off just one little thing to spray my flame. I don't know what it is but I don't realize how much anger I have until after a fight, riot, or a shoot out ...then I start to tell my self I could have got killed,

But there always another voice in my head that tells me you didn't get killed so why you trippin' and I always stick with that voice and start another crazy ass shoot out.

Win or lose to my self I just get that excitement. I like the adrenaline rush, starting a riot to me It's like a dog fight, rumble tell the true color drips. My homeboy's didn't give me my name for nothing.

**-Knuckles**

**From The Beat:** Does that adrenalin rush come from the violence or the risk? There are lots of people (Type T, they're called... thrill seekers) who love that crazy rush. And while some of them go the way you have so far, fighting and whatnot, others go for high risk jobs, like: producing live tv, rock climbing, taking pictures in war zones, joining the army or working for the FBI, or even doing crazy extreme sports on their vacations. Maybe you could turn that love for excitement to do exciting things that won't a. kill you b. make you responsible for someone else's death c. put you in jail. What do you think?

## Dear Judge (Part #2)

I know I did wrong, but I still am a good kid. I just was hanging with the wrong people that would lead me to do wrong at times but what I did this time, this was my fault.

I can tell you that one. Didn't nobody make me take them pills. I took them on my own. and I know I should have never took them pills in the first place, but it was my friend's b-day. But this time I get out I'm gon' change for good.

And I bet you my life on that one for real, judge. And I know you think I'm saying that because you gave me two strikes, but no. I'm saying this because that's how I feel, and I really need to be better then this.

But Judge I'm just asking for one more chance, and I believe you will give me that. Thanks for your time.

**-Al Boo Boo**

**From The Beat:** We hope the judge hears your articulate plea for a second chance. But if he doesn't, remember you are still much better off than you first thought you would be when you got arrested, and remember that even with strikes, you can eventually keep all the promises you've made to yourself, if you have the will! Peace.

## Me, Myself, And I

I am hated by all, not loved. I am a nobody and that's it. Other people think I'm a nobody. Above the noise, I will do good, no matter who tries to bring me down,

And I'll go on with my life, get out and do what I have to do, to go to college, try to be a staff at juvenile hall and show these people that I can be somebody in life and above the noise.

I will stay out of here forever. Honestly I think I'm a good person: kind and giving. And I don't care what other people think about me and how they think about me. I only care what I think about myself.

**-Al Boo Boo**

**From The Beat:** Oh, Alex, you are the farthest thing ever from a 'nobody.' It's good to see how each week, you keep that eye on the prize. It's ok (and human) to care what people think of you, and eventually, when you get out and start your new life, you will have the chance to start choosing your peers on your own: That means choosing people who respect you, who bring out the positive in you, and help you stay on point to meet your goals.

## Good Bye

I didn't get to say good bye to my lil' nephew Ruben before he died but when I saw him in his casket I got to say my good bye. You will always be in my heart. 03.21.95-10.26.06 R.I.P. Ruben and Lil' J.

**-Scarface**

**From The Beat:** If you could talk to Ruben today, what would you tell him? What advice would you have for him?

## Over, And Over

Man all I got to say is how can you come back here more than three times and still haven't learn your lesson. There's kids in here been here 12 times and still getting straight releases and then you got kids been in here 2 times and are going to a group homes just because they're violating their probation it's like the people that's trying to change is getting sent off to a different town and the one's that ain't trying to change is still getting' breaks.

All I'm saying that's why a ninja that do something with his life end up having a big struggle.

**-Young Blade**

**From The Beat:** Why do you suppose some folks come here and never learn their lessons? What are you going to do differently with your life so you never return to such a setting?

## It Hurts Me

I don't like to see dogs fightin'.

It hurts me...

and I don't like to see dogs running the streets.

**-Ella**

**From The Beat:** What about people – do you see similarities between dogs having to fight and run the streets, and people who find themselves in the same position? Is it the same feeling, or different?

## Love Strikes Again

Love strikes a feeling I never felt inside  
Until a beautiful lady like you passed my eyes  
Seeing that you have a man  
I put my feelings on hold 'cause I understand  
You said that he's not right for you  
And don't want him anymore 'cause the love wasn't true  
Stop to think that I couldn't control my love,  
Because they sent me an angel from up above,  
I asked you why did you choose me  
You said because I set your true feelings free  
You were tired of doing something you didn't understand  
And you said instead of a boy you needed a man  
Seeing that you wanted me putting old feelings to rest  
Your opening, your heart gave me the key to your chest  
Opening the chest seeing that the candle wasn't lit  
I closed it hugged you with a sweet passionate kiss  
We made sweet love right then and there  
As our love scent filled the air  
I need a girl and you need a man  
It's crazy but love strikes again.

**-Lil' Mainy The Prince**

**From The Beat:** Nice love poem young Prince. You have wonderful skills, and it's nice to read such a heartfelt love poem, after having read numerous dark pieces from you. Keep challenging yourself and keep the thoughts flowing our way, we always appreciate your writings and your thoughts in the workshops!

## Stop High Power Fakin'

Sometimes you can learn a lot about a person through the juvenile justice center. I say this 'cause every day I sit back and observe how male detainees would step out their character just to impress a female gender detainee. Another thing that runs through my mind is how the male detainee tries to perform or put on an act in order to get recognition.

Also I always wonder why does so much high power fakin', talkin' about what they got or what they're doin' on the outs, knowin' that they be over exaggeratin' and lyin' man. I wish these dudes would keep it solid -- stop sellin' tickets, stop telling hood fairy tales.

**-D-Money**

**From The Beat:** Why do you think people are so afraid to show their true selves? What's funny is that most of us are actually much better – more thoughtful, more caring, more vulnerable, more LIKEABLE, inside than under all those tough exteriors. Why do human beings 'fake it' with each other so much?

## Staying Out of Trouble

This is Lil' B stay up. I'm going home and staying out of trouble, trying to become something in life.

But yeah, I can't wait until I get out so I can change and graduate from High School and live my life, you feel me?

That's all Beat, I'm out Lil' B. I'm gonna change my ways, doing crimes and get a good job to keep me going.

**-Lil' B**

**From The Beat:** This is great to read, but now we want to hear your plan! How are you going to make these good thigns happen?

## My Frustration

Man this unit they got me in say a lot of good stuff is suppose to happen, but they let a school expert come in and just take over and then I don't know when they going to come get me for my release on E.M.

It's about to be whole week since my last court date when they gave me my release, man, I wish I can switch my judges, but I'll tell you the truth don't nobody care about how ninjas being locked up, all they care about is getting paid.

In here they give us a three and half minute showers, but they say it be five minutes! You can't even wash your body all the way and don't even be washin' yo hair because you ain't going to have time to wash yo' ass, and then when you tell them they want to locked you up, talking about how we can't tell them how to do their job, so I told them how long I need to wash my ass and they bring up that same ass excuse talking about you in jail this aint jail this baby Rita!! I wish this was Rita at least they let you smoke because a ninjas be stressin' in this shhh. And then you want to fire on somebody, but you don't want to get six months, and on top of that you can't even have pencils in yo' room because ninjas messed it up by writing on the walls and shhh.

All I want to say is when you get out, stay out ninja! I've been here twelve times! Find something else to do 'cause I'm tired of being locked up and that's all, peace out like I say in my last piece, I'm just a young ninjas out of Richmond, CA.

**-Young Blade**

**From The Beat:** We do not know why you are locked up, but if you were suppose to be released a month ago, and you're still here, something is up? What's the latest? We hope you do get a fresh start Blade, and find a new way of living free of incarceration. We know you don't like this experience so we do hope you have had enough, and you never have to experience anymore incarceration!

## Candy Man

Hey Beat, what it do. I am going to write on the topic, but before I do I want to say --Alan your dad is in a better place. So keep your head up and be cool.

But yeah to write on the topic the first horror movie I saw was Candy Man.

Before I first saw Candy Man I was never scared of any movie. After I saw the movie I didn't sleep in my bed. For three days I slept in my mom's bed, but after that I said I would never be scared of a movie.

**-Shadow**

**From The Beat:** We agree - Candy Man was terrifying - and we were a little older than you when it came out, but still wanted to hide under a bed afterwards!

## A Memorable Good Bye

My last goodbye was

To my first auntie. No one

Knew it was her time to die

She just thought she was sick

Back and forth to the hospital but they said that

Nothing was wrong

Knowing it was her time all she could do is stay strong.

If I could say goodbye that

Last time I would give her a thousand kisses and say

"I love you... and watch over me from the sky."

**-Natay**

**From The Beat:** We bet your auntie knew just how much you loved her, and if it's true that the people we love watch over us after they're gone, we bet the love of this poem reached her too.

## On My Mind

What's up Beat, it's me Dearey. Just wanna say what's up to everybody. Well, I wrote that my girl was pregnant, but, now I'm hella sad 'cause she lost it I just wanted to let ya know.

She lost it 'cause she slipped and fell. Well, I'm going through some hard times. Well I was just with her on my pass last week. On Saturday we was supposed to go to the movies, but shhh....don't tell nobody. We had a lots of fun, if you know what I mean. Well I've been with my girl for a year and two months, which is a long time. Well I gotta go, peace.

**-Dearey**

**From The Beat:** We're so sorry to hear about your girl's troubles, but it's good to hear you're still together and happy. Now it's just a question of both of you staying focused on getting your lives in shape so that if you do have a baby, it's when you're both ready.

## Questions

Life is full of many questions. The amount of questions varies upon each individual living. One may not understand the harshness of life, one may be curious of it's hard shifts. But for most of us that fits my scenario.

They'd ask why is everything the way it is? I figure that everything that happens to me, was meant to be. If I wasn't in here I think I'd be dead or something. I can really say being in the county definitely saved me.

But the ultimate question for me is, even though I've slowed down, will I come to a halt, or will I pick up speed once again?

**-Angel**

**From The Beat:** The question you ask yourself is one of the most important you'll ever face, because the answer you choose to live may well decide your future. Step up and try to give us a response next week, OK? We'll be waiting with baited breath....

## Thinking

Man, being locked up ain't cool, but it give you a chance to realize who really cares about you, in my case, my family. I'm getting out on E.M. as soon as my mom get one line on the phone and when I do get out they ain't going to like the new Blade, but they don't have to if they don't want to.

I'll tell you this, what I did notice when I was out that my girl went to go see her ex ninja when he was locked up so what I'm going to do is get me a new female fast and I pray that her head on straight and I don't have no problems with this one.

If this girl say she going to do what she say she going to do I'm going to have to take care of my responsibility don't care what nobody say cause I'll be down if I have someone else taking care of my baby and I'll go off if she tries to have a ninja take care of my baby and I'm going to make sure that my baby have my last name and I'm make sure that my baby have what he or she suppose to have and not no raggitty shhh either even if I got to stop smokin' weed, ports and start stacking big time because I'll go off if she try to sign up for welfare 'cause I don't want my son or my daughter want to kill me when they get older like I'm going to do when I see my daddy who put me through this.

**-Young Blade**

**From The Beat:** WE understand you want a family a lot different than how you were raised. Well, you know what you want and don't want and we hope you step up large in handling your responsibility too. You will save a lot of money if you can cut the smoking/partying, that's for sure. We also hope you wait awhile before you even consider a child. Get yourself together, and when you are a bit more mature/older you will be ready for parenthood.



## RIP Mom

The person that I had to say goodbye to was my mother. I was kind of upset with her because she did not tell nobody that she had something wrong with her liver, so she passed away from liver failure.

It really hurt me, because she wasn't in my life for fourteen years, and she had just got into my life. I only knew her for like two months.

Then she left me and my older sister, but I finally forgave her because I understand her position she was in. RIP Mom.

**-Jillian**

**From The Beat:** This is so moving - tragic because you had your mom in your life for such a short time, but also heartwarming because at least you had the chance to meet her, to look into her eyes, to know that she loved you. No matter what happens, no one can take that away.

## They Do Treat Us With Respect

My days at camp made me happy. All the trips we went on to Boomers and the carnival. They had treated me and the students very nice and fair. The staff at camp Sweeney are nice and generous. They treat us with respect and some of us treat them with respect.

But when we do good they always reward us with something good. One time at Camp Sweeney this big guy named Wilkins had bought us 50 burgers, chips, and sodas just for the people who stayed on the weekend at camp.

**-Big G**

**From The Beat:** It's been a long time since we saw a piece that looked at the bright side of camp... Have you learned things during your time here - either from staff you respect or from programs and teachers - that might help you do better when you get out? Positive knowledge that you think you can use?

## I Don't Like Seeing Dogs Fight

Dogfights, I don't like them -- because dogs are very cute sometimes. But when they start fighting I just leave cause I don't like seeing that stuff. My cousin use to let their dogs be bleeding everywhere and I just left so every time I see a dog fight I leave, 'cause you had a lot of bad memories. To me the fight was very bad.

I think that it is not right to let the dogs get hurt and bruised up like they do. I feel so sorry for that ...it's not cool to do stuff like that and he should not do that.

**-Vida**

**From The Beat:** You show great compassion for the suffering these animals go through. Who was it who taught you compassion, taught you how to care so much for others' feelings?

## It's Crazy

I want to talk about the killing that have been goin on for the last few months...

It's crazy how youngstas have been droppin' like flies. It's like they don't care about their lives. The population in Oakland is decreasing, while the killings are increasing... that's why I think it's a reason fo' me to be in camp... 'cause I might have been one of them, where in the 8th months of the year and it's almost over, and we're already at seventy-nine.

**-Lonnie**

**From The Beat:** It's more than crazy - it's insane, it's wrong, it's unjust, and it's got to stop. It seems like the only people who can stop it, though, are the young people who will inherit Oakland's future. That means you, young Lonnie... but before you can save your city, you must save yourself. Tell us how you plan to do that, because we need people like you!

## Struggle

My female the sickest 'cause she listens to what the street say

That got me stressing 'cause she might be leaving any day.

I tried to pray but when I prayed He ain't holla back  
That's why I'm out here tryin' to get these stacks

And why that, 'cause of the situation my bra in  
They tryin' to send him to the pen and do him in  
Got the family thinking bout some major shhh: his  
mama, grandma and baby sick.

The reason why I'm tryin' to get these stacks  
Is 'cause the lawyer seems like she want to help get him  
back

But judge be on some other shhh ain't tryin' to let him  
go

So I be on some other shhh 'cause I miss my brother,  
So I be thinking to myself saying that's some screwed  
up shhh!

Free my big bra I miss you and wish I can hug you bra.

**-Lil' D**

**From The Beat:** With the trouble your brother is facing, your family needs you more than ever... but they don't need you to get stacks, they need you to watch your back... there's only one thing worse than losing one of your loved ones to the system - and that's losing two. Be strong and support your family - by taking care of yourself. Is there a positive way you can do this?

## I Remember!!

I remember when you made me cry.

I remember when you told me all the lies.

I remember when I just sat and wondered why,  
Why the lies, why must I cry? And must you wish I'd  
died?

I remember the feeling of wishing I could just hit you in  
the eye,

And make you cry, and wish that you would just die.

I also remember the good times, when you would be  
sweet as pies.

I remember the way you didn't use to lie or wished that  
I'd die.

I remember how that feeling made me feel so good  
inside.

**-Juicy**

**From The Beat:** The death or end of what used to feel like a good relationship can be torture! There's always that hope that it can go back to what it was ... but in this case it sounds like you are right, it's time to move on. You deserve to feel better than this!

## In the Ghetto

Livin' life in the ghetto man it ain't that fun

Walkin' blocks poppin' glocks

Livin' life smokin' drugs

Some ninjas is weenies man

Some ninjas are thugs

But every where you go man

You might catch a slug

You might catch one in you' chest

That's why I stay with a vest

But if I keep livin' this lifestyle

It's gon' put me to rest

So I'ma leave it at that and never come right

**-Young Jr**

**From The Beat:** It's funny, if there were only two choices to be - weenies or thugs - as you say, it makes sense that you might want to admire thugs. But we also know a lot of strong, confident, hardworking people in the ghetto, who have heart and still stay positive... That's a third category that we believe in - do you?

## Two Kinds of People

There are the ones that love you and want what's best for you, and then there are others that don't care for you and use you for money and rely on you.

**-Elisi**

**From The Beat:** Good breakdown, Elisi. So in your life, which of these two types do you spend more time with?

## Dedicated

This is to the homies that ain't around no more  
The one that are in a grave or behind them jail doors.

Because no matter what, we all miss ya.

Homies will never forget ya.

They gave y'all 25 with a L

Now y'all gotta start a new life in jail

For the homies killed by crooked police

We pour out liquor for y'all in the hood streets.

Here is for the homies dead or in jail we miss y'all all.

RIP: Gimp, Loto, OG Jimbo.

**-Big Boi**

**From The Beat:** Do you think you will start a new life? And have you spent much time imagining what that life will feel like? Tell us, put it down for The Beat!

## RIP Monster

Monster got got,

tears shed,

mommas cried,

bottles poured out and ninjas dropped.

Hoods got together and it won't be the same. Ever.

RIP Monster

**-Hollow T**

**From The Beat:** Doesn't this horrorshow list of casualties tell you anything about the lifestyle you are so caught in? All those tears and funerals, all those crying mommas, as you say? We believe you deserve much better, and so did all the young men on you too long list.

## No Fear

The first time I went to a horror movie I was not scared because I don't fear nothing. I just want to let you know that all you gangstas that be scared of horror films y'all fake.

**-Young Rell**

**From The Beat:** A person who doesn't know fear is a person who doesn't respect the value of his or her own life and freedom... we would feel sorry for someone who had nothing to fear, because that would mean they had nothing to live for, nothing to lose is that really how you feel?

## Rest In Paradise Nam Pham, January 13, 2006

A close friend of mine was stabbed and killed. Two weeks later was his funeral.

The last thing I said to him before he passed was "What's up man, what's good." I didn't even get to say good-bye while he was alive.

At the funeral I walked up to the casket dropped a rose in, and said goodbye. His name was Nam Pham R.I.P

**-M**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for honoring the loss of your friend in these pages. Consider the publication of this RIP one more rose you've dedicated to his memory. Peace.

## Children Of The Corn

When I was a youngsta, the scariest movie I saw was "Children of the Corn," the way the kids looked and the way they killed people. I was like 5-6 years old and I saw it with my grandma and my cousins. If I saw the movie today it wouldn't bother me.

**-Junebug**

**From The Beat:** If you thought the movie was scary, you gotta read the short story (by Stephen King, of course). It'll make your hair stand on end, trust us!

## Locked Up

I been in one unit for about six days. Then I moved to another unit.

I've been here for fifty days and I feel like I been here for longer. The food doesn't have a taste. I feel like I can eat anything or stuff I didn't like before.

I go to school Monday threw Friday. Also we have church in our units.

I can't wait until I go to camp for six to eight months.

When I get out of camp I get to go home and see all my family and kick it with the homies.

**-Lil' Frisco**

**From The Beat:** We'd hate to see you get so used to Juvenile Hall and become institutionalized - but if you go back to "kickin' it with the homies," how long do you honestly think it will take before trouble finds you again? What about school? Work? What would it take to make you commit to never having to come back?

## Tales From The Crypt

It wasn't a scary movie, but the show "Tales from the Crypt" was scary. I was about two years old watching it at my grandmom's house, and a couple of the characters were scary looking. I'd run out the room or turn the TV off.

I would like to get a job that keeps me stable, get married with 3 kids, retire healthy, and save for the kids.

**-Damien**

**From The Beat:** What kind of a job would you want to get? What do you think gets in the way, so far, of you reaching your dreams?

## When You Get Out, Stay Out!

Man I don't know when I'm getting out of this hell hole. It's been a whole week since I been to court and it was up to my PO to let me out on EM. And on top of that I forgot my court date!

But it's kind of a good thing, so I won't be worryin' about it too much sometimes when you trip off things too much it take too long to come, but if you don't trip off it, then when you look up it's here.

I haven't heard or seen my PO in a whole month man! All we can do is shhh, eat, work out, sleep, and read or write. Other than that we got to listen to these fake ass rent-a --officers.

Camp ain't a place don't nobody want to go to but it's better than this. A couple of months sounds like it ain't nothing, but a couple months of yo' life doing nothing is something! Or just think of what you can do in a couple of months -- you can accomplish a lot of stuff in that amount of time. The only thing you doing in here is staying alive only in here. But if you was in the pen it's a change -- you can be killed. All I'm saying is, when you get out stay out and do the right things so you won't come back.

'Cause this ain't a place you want to be or locked up period man ...I'm just a young ninja from Richmond. Peace out.

**-Young Blade**

**From The Beat:** We hear you - but it seems like when people are locked up, they feel they want to change, but then when they get out it seems to just go back to the way it was before? Why is that, and what does it mean? In your case, what things will you need to change if you want to get (and stay) out of jail?

## They Always Want To Lock Us Up

Man they treat us like we in solitary confinement or on death row. They always want to lock us up. ...but it's good 'cause it's going to come right back on them. Because they going to feel our pain. It ain't cool when a ninja got to shhh and need some gasket to sit on 'cause don't nobody want to sit they ass on that cold metal...probably get a frost bite on they say ass.

But you but they know what they say? They're on their break!

But they got a whole line full of kids' eye's glued to the computer screen right along with theirs. Man I think somebody important must have went to Contra Costa County and saw their new hall and made this one just like ...it but left a couple things out.

But it ain't like I like coming to the hall. I'm saying that the Hall is better and I'm not saying that because I'm from Richmond and that's what hall they take you to.

A Beat y'all should try to bring The Beat Within out there and, I ain't making ya'll either ...I'm just saying that'll go! Allright, peace out.

**-Young Blade**

**From The Beat:** What are the things they "left out" that the hall in Contra Costa has? It's good to know these things, because after all, who knows better what does and doesn't work in a facility than the young people who find themselves having to live in one! As for starting a Beat there, thanks for the tip ... you know, maybe one day after you turn 21, if you're living right, you could even come do a guest workshop!

## RIP Jason

It was when I was with my friend Jason. I was with him the same day and I was going to go to a party. I asked him did he want to go, but he said that he wanted to stay with my other friends.

So I said all right and said good-bye, and so I left and went to the party. I was at the party when I got a call and they said that Jason died. I said "What happened?" and they told me that his house caught on fire.

He was high and he didn't know what to do, so he died. I asked my friend with happened and he said that his mom was cooking in it and caught on fire, and they ran out of the house without him and went somewhere. We couldn't find her. The sad part is she left him for dead.

**-Mallgui**

**From The Beat:** This is truly horrifying and tragic. How long ago was it that this happened? Did you go to the funeral? If you had to say the one thing you miss most about Jason, what would it be?

## Rest in Peace Binium Yifru

What's up Beat? I'm gonna write about one of my homeboys that passed away. When I heard about it I couldn't even believe it was true, because when I heard the news I was drunk. I was shocked when I heard the news 'cause he was a coo' ass homie and I knew him ever since I was a little boy.

The thing that hurt me the most was when I had to see him in his casket. It was the worst feelin' I've ever had and it didn't seem real that I was standin' in front of him, Seein' his family hurt was hella sad to me. I just wished that my homie was still with us but I guess it was his time and I know he's up in heaven with God.

Rest in peace Binium Yifru. I love you homie, and I will never forget about you.

**-Lil' Mario**

**From The Beat:** Amen. Do you feel like your thoughts on life, and death, changed after having to look at him in his casket? It's always sad when a person dies, when it's a young person though, it feels like a true outrage.

## The Hills Have Eyes Two

Sure I remember when I got super spooked from a little movie. The movie that I was watchin' was The Hills Have Eyes 2. That movie spooked me so bad, and I was 15.

I swear to God I went to go see this movie with my girl and she was spooked to the fullest She kept hugging me and puttin' her face in my chest, tryin' not to look. And yeah, I was scared but you know as the dude I acted like it was nothing, that I didn't care. ...But in my mind I wanted to do the same but like I said I had to be the true man, and to I was distracted cause she was all over me but the thing that scared me more then One is when they kept popin out the cuts stabbin' someone or scarin' some one,

I'm still 15 and if I saw it again with some one I would know when the scary stuff would happen and when it does I would grab their shoulders really fast to make them jump even more or even scream.

**-Rana**

**From The Beat:** Yikes! Now that we know that, we're never going to the movies with you! You'd probably make us spill our popcorn and soda from fear!

## Grandpa RIP

When I was ten my grandpa was diagnosed with stage four cancer. He got three months, then he had a seizure. It was coming back, his cancer began to come back but this time it spread through his whole body. He was sent to a people home.

I was with him every day I could be if spent as much time with him as I could, and then on my birthday I said goodbye to him to go sing in a choir in Palo Alto.

Little did I know it was the last time I would ever see my grandpa again.

**-Kramer**

**From The Beat:** Wow - it sounds like you loved him with all your heart, and he knew it. If he were alive today, what kinds of advice would he have for you? What kinds of things would you be doing together?

## Messed Up

Well what I think about what's happened to Michael Vick is messed up. Because they just see a famous person with a lot of money and enjoying his life and his career and try to look for the littlest thing that he did wrong or thought he did wrong. They just want to see somebody struggle and get some money for it... that what I think.

**-Young Blade**

**From The Beat:** One thing for sure, is that they've decided to "make an example" of Vick. He may pay a high price because the story has gotten so big. So does this mean that you think dogfighting should be legal?

## Change

What's up Beat? Change is a good thing if you change for the better.

If you know how and you really want to, you maybe can -- but you can't change if you can't change your ways of acting or who you kick it wit'. They might treat you different then they did when you was doing what you was doing.

If it was up to me I would change my ways I would do it for my own sake and my family's sake so they don't have to trip about me getting hurt, or even worse, me dying.

**-Lil' Ant**

**From The Beat:** You say "if it was up to me," but of course, who else could it be up to but you? You have the power to change, of course, and it sounds like you already know that that you have to change what you do and who you spend your time with. Are you ready to do that?



## Money Over Momma

Money in da bank  
 Ever since 3rd grade  
 I got paid  
 So let's have fun  
 Count this money til it touch the sky  
 Many, I'm fly, just like my zipper  
 Tryin'a get money off of stupid dumb whipper  
 Hit her and flip her  
 Just get that dough, Man  
 Game so cold you would think I was da snowman  
 Just like microwave a bowl of mac and cheese  
 Money of a beezy is what I deserve  
 Rapping every day so you hear my fire  
 I won't retire until the day I die  
 Even if it makes me own mamma cry

-Kimberly

**From The Beat:** When money is the only goal, people will do anything to get it. And, when you're willing to do anything for money, you're on a path that leads here, where the only money you're stacking is going straight into the pockets of the system. They thank you...

## A Memorable Good-Bye

A memorable good-bye that wasn't so good was when my aunt passed away. When I found out the news, me, my mom and sister rushed over to her house. She had already passed away, but was still at her house, so we got there before the ME (Medical Examiner).

When I seen her, she had no color in her face. She was very still. She had her eyes closed. She looked very peaceful. Even though it hurts me to this day, I know she is in a better place, because before she passed she was in a lot of pain. RIP Barbra J. Watson

-Gold M

**From The Beat:** We're so sorry that your aunt passed away. Do you know what she died of? We're guessing it was cancer because of all that pain, so we're glad she's out of it. The pain you're feeling at her loss will slowly recede, but the memory of the pain — just as the memory of her life — will always stay with you.

## People Stressin' For You

What's up, Beat? It's Enano. Life is something special that nobody can't take it away from you. You're gonna get out some day. I know it's stressful when you got people that love you, stressin' for you, and people through the same thing you going through, but when you stress a lot, it brings you down, but you got to keep your head up and move forward, 'cause this is the life we live, but keep your life going.

This is Enano and I'm out this piece. Everybody that's in the halls, keep your heads up and stay strong. This is for all that's going through it.

-Enano

**From The Beat:** You have a generous heart. The families of you who are incarcerated often do suffer terribly, while you're gone. Do you think the fact that now that they know their families, homies, girlfriends often miss and worry about them, will motivate young people in juvy to stay cool and out of any mess, once they're free again? What about you?



## Life Today

Life today is like a scary movie, 'cause nowadays you don't know what's gonna happen. You never know when you gonna die. It's like a movie—you know, like when you watchin' a scary movie—you never know when the action's gonna pop up. The bullets flyin' over your head. You never know when a person's gonna die. That's how it is in the streets. Basically, that all we know right now—squeezing that trigger. It's like people wanna do it (stop the violence,) but we can't. People goin' south. People paying out with their bodies. They pay baseball players \$225 million for ten years. They could take some of that money and put it in the 'hood. We'd make that money bubble.

I think we need Barak Obama.

I wanna get old so I can see my wife and kids. They got us sittin' in jails. I'm tryna get out.

-Dubb

**From The Beat:** Is there some way, when you get out, you can avoid the drama, the danger, even if you can't stop it? Or have you fallen in love with, even become addicted to, the glamour, lore, mythology, the scary movie of the streets? If you're even thinking about "squeezing that trigger" because that's all you know, don't you also know you need to acquire some new skills fast? If Barak Obama were to be elected president of the US, how do you think he would change our country?

## Not Right

Welcome to Log Cabin  
 Where the grass is yellow  
 White Ts are brown  
 Staff couldn't break up a fight  
 If their lives depended on it  
 More runners than a marathon  
 Look out for days  
 And won't see nothing  
 Hot all day; cold all night  
 Won't see 2007  
 Or the start of 2008  
 And I missed the last half of 2006  
 I been here five½ months  
 Still not even halfway through this  
 The only place where you're locked up  
 Down, in and out  
 Took away all we had  
 So we got nothin' left but time  
 Welcome to Log Cabin

-Birdman

**From The Beat:** You're amazingly patient with accommodating your year plus away from home, from your life on the outs. We know from your writing that you're yearning to leave, but somehow you've chosen to stay and finish your program. Have you used any of your space and relative peace at the Ranch, away from the street drama, to consider what else in the world appeals to you? What?

## Running Away

Was good with The Beat? I'm holding it down in Unit 3. I wish I was out right now. I miss the block. I talk to the squad every day. They tell me all the shhh that go on. When I hear all the stuff they come up on, that make me mad 'cause I'm not out. This my second summer in the halls. They can't hold me down forever. They try to send me to all type of group homes. Group homes not for me so I run every time.

**-Chuck**

**From The Beat:** The simple but sad reality is this, Chuck: If you keep doing what you do on the block (and keep running from placements), you'll be missing the block a whole lot more (and soon the block will stop missing you). We hope you see that it's your own behavior that leads you here, and that if you think they can't hold you down forever, you need to educate yourself about the criminal justice system. There are about 170,000 Californians locked up in prison. Of those, more than 4,000 are 3rd strikers doing at least 25-life; more than 4,000 (including more than 2,000 juveniles) are serving LWOP — "Life Without Parole;" more than 3,000 are on death row. That's at least 11,000 men, women AND children who have the bitter experience to know that they CAN hold you down forever...

## Miserable

My drawing is Stewie lock up behind bars. Miserable that he can't go home to his mom any time soon. He knows he still going to be able to see her when he does his time. He cry's every night thinking about his family

**-Ricky**

**From The Beat:** We can't be sure if your drawing made it in or not, but for those who haven't seen it, it's a drawing of the baby (Stewie) from "Family Guy" behind bars. Do you like Stewie? What do you like about him?

## Master Piece, Part 2

I sittin' in jail watchin' time pass, going to court date after court date, making me madder than mad thinking about the choices I could have did but never had. Lookin' up to my big bra, trying to get up in the beat. But they told me I couldn't 'cause when I started going wild I went stupid an' knuckle up.

**-Za-Zoo**

**From The Beat:** We almost didn't print this, Za-Zoo, because it really doesn't say much of anything. It doesn't tell us what "going stupid" really means for you. It doesn't tell us about the choices you could have made. It doesn't tell us what choices you hope to make in the future. Next time, you should try your hand at a real masterpiece, and not just a few sentences that explain nothing.

## When I'm Locked Up

I would like to say wassup with all my ninjas up in the halls. This bruh Rog. Y'all better read ma shhh. Anyway, y'all better publish this 'cause I ain't just writing this for nothin'.

But when I'm locked up, I think of all the things I could've done in the outs. Probably chillin' with ma ninjas already knowing we would've been high the whole week.

But that ain't the reason why I still sitting here thinking. It's that I wanna be with my family. Even though I consider my friend as family, I have love for them. And I just thinking I could be chillin' with Hank Shababa, Val the Kid, and Ulala — the only ones that is out. I love all you ninjas I just mentioned.

**-Combo**

**The Beat Within:** Besides getting out and immediately putting yourself under the control of a chemical high, is there anything else you dream about for when you get out of here? Experience tells us that if this is all you can think about and plan for, you'll be doing a lot of reminiscing from behind these walls. If you really want to be with your family — and be able to stay with them — what do you have to do to make that happen?

## Family

I cant wait to go home to see my family and be wit' my bm and my baby girl. I just want to be in her life. watch her grow up. I want to be a good dad to her.

**-Deandra**

**From The Beat:** We applaud your goal of wanting to be a good dad, but we have to ask where that goal was when you put yourself behind these walls? We don't think you were thinking of her at that moment, so we hope the focus you have on her now continues when you are free to make your own choices again.

## TIP To Da Homie R.B

When I heard gunshots and no white van rollin' around slappin', I knew somethin' was wrong. So I tell lil' bra, I think RB gone."

He like, "It can't be." I'm like, "We'll see," Next thing you know white ghost ride up on me. Like, "Who drive a white van?" He like, "He not so good." I'm like, "Hell naw, it can't be RB." I'm like, "I was just ridin' and smokin' with him. I just said good-bye and I love you big bra.

You never ever know when you can lose someone you love da most.

**-Mookey**

**The Beat Within:** Of course it's true that none of us can ever know the future. But there are things we can do (and there are things we can not do) to make the possibility of losing someone we love much less. From your description (and we wish we had more description and less quotes), it seems like you and RB were in the world where sudden death is to be expected... tragically!

## Time To Bounce

Ninjas be up in here loafin' like it's the house or something. They be lookin' so comfortable in dis place just kickin' back like it's all good. But what theses people don't understand is that this is jail. It might seem easy, but watch when you start goin' to the big house, like 850 or the pen. You ain't gon be loafin' no more 'cause you gon have to look over your shoulder all the time. But I know I shouldn't be talkin' 'cause I'm locked up too. But I'm getting out soon, and I learned. I ain't comin' back no more.

**-GB**

**From The Beat:** You're right, GB, it gets a lot worse from here on for those who insist on handing over big chunks of their life to the system. What have you learned that is going to keep you out? Don't ever forget that the promises you make in here (and almost everybody makes them) are easy to keep in here, because you have no power to make choices for yourself. It's when you're free to make your own decisions that these promises become difficult — but all the more important to keep.

## It's Finna Get Ugly

Yeah, dis ya boy Co-B hit you wit' da no braina. I about to get out some time dis week. It's da 31 of July and da Walden open tomorrow. But you already know I'm finna run, not 'cause I can't do it. It's because I feel like they took too much time from me already. So why should I do more time for them and I could get on?

But anyways, one of my nimkas got hit dis week, so y'all know how dat go. But I just can't wait to I touch down so I can take back what the system took from me.

**-Lil' Curt**

**From The Beat:** You have two big lessons still to learn. The first is that you can NEVER GET BACK what the system has taken from you — or, more accurately, what you've given up to the system. Time never stops and can never be returned. The other lesson is that when you run from a judicial placement, all you're really doing is running right back into the cold arms of the system who will take even more of what you've already given up. It's too bad that you might have to learn these lessons after you lose even more time. But maybe you'll be lucky and grow up before that happens.

## Money, Power, Respect

Money, power, respect is something almost everybody wants for real. Ninja be thinking like somebody just supposed to respect them. Or money just supposed to fall in they hands. Or they gone have power 'cause of who they are.

But to me, to get money, power and respect you gotta earn it. If you a gansta look at Al Capone, or Scarface. Or John Gotti. If you try and do it like them, then you will get money power and respect. But you can also get these things in positive ways. But for all those who want money, power and respect, I'm just putting y'all on that it's different ways to get it, feel me.

**-Hot-Rod**

**From The Beat:** Have you ever considered that people may deserve respect for no other reason that they are people — all created by the same God that created you? As for the gangsters you named, Al Capone died spent the last year of his term in Alcatraz slowly dying of syphilis (he died a painful death after his release); Scarface is only a movie gangster, but he dies a hopeless junkie, blasted by a sawed-off shotgun as his spine explodes out of his stomach; and John Gotti died a painful death from cancer in a federal prison hospital. So much for money, power and respect...

## A Memorable Good-Bye

It was hard to say bye to my grandma. It hurts so bad, but she's in heaven in peace being my guardian angel.

**-Young Hitters**

**From The Beat:** A guardian angel keeps the person she's guarding safe from danger. Are you helping your angel, or are you doing things that would make her unhappy?

## Why Trip Over Dogfights?

What's up Beat? Dogfights? I don't know why people be trippin' 'bout dogfights. People just don't have nothing else to do but be nosey and have a saying bout everything. So if you nosey, people are reading this, stop being nosey and just go on wit' your life. Stop tryin' to butt in in people problems. All I have say it's ok for dogfights, so they should let Mr. Vick go. I'm out.

**-Vago**

**From The Beat:** Well, what Mr. Vick allegedly did is against the law, so they aren't going to just let him go. What do you think will happen to him? Why do you think people care about how humans treat their dogs? In some countries, they eat dogs. Do you care about that?

## A Memorable Good- Bye

It was February 14, 2006. I was wit' ma bras and we was wit' dis girl, 'bout to ride around and smoke. But before we left the block, I stopped at our big bra OG house to get a coat. When I talked to him, he was coo' for real. Everything was good.

So we left wit' the girl right, and got by Popeyes when it happened. The next thing I know, my phone started to ring and it was my bra OG girl telling me he was shot. So we jetted back to the block. There were police, ambulance, fire trucks, everywhere. It seemed like forever, but like twelve minutes later they was bringing my bra out on a stretcher. I felt pain that I never felt before for real. The next day I got word he was dead. I said goodbye to him four days later at the funeral.

RIP OG. I'll see you when I get there.

**-Hot Rod**

**From The Beat:** That pain you felt that you never felt before, do you ever think that everyone who loses someone they love feels exactly that pain? Does it matter whether the person in pain is one of "your" boys or one of "their" boys? The pain is identical! We're sorry you lost your homie, just as we're always sorry whenever anyone is killed on these streets.

## A Memorable Good-Bye

I remember when I was with my baby. I was going to my house to chill with her and if it wasn't for her I wouldn't've seen my best friend to say good-bye. She told me, "Ey Grumpy, your homie's right there. I saw him and he saw me."

I got of the bus and we was talking for a minute. The next day they called me and told me he got shot. so I called his mom and it was true. He passed away. That was the last time I talked to my homie and said good-bye. I miss you dawg. Rest in paradise lil' homie. I will always miss you. Never forget you dawg ALRATO!!! To everyone doing time, stay up.

**-Grumpy**

**From The Beat:** You were lucky to be able to say good-bye, but your friend's luck ran out. Did this make you want to change anything in your own life, so that your luck won't run out prematurely?

## Missin' My Friends And Family

W'sup Beat? I been here for four weeks, but it seem forever. I miss my friends and tha way we used to hang out in the house, playing against each other on Grand Turismo 4 with the steering wheels, eating there and having parties. Friends drive by the house and has some dub shhh. Get out and blow some.

I just miss those days when we go out at night and find things to do. Also missing my family. Hate having them come here taking time off their work just to visit me. Ain't coming back.

**-Chinese Boi**

**From The Beat:** The best part of this is "Ain't coming back," but in order to keep that promise, you might have to stop doing some of the things that you miss. For example, smoking herbs and going out at night to "find things to do" might be a couple of activities it would be better to give up.

## That Horror Movie

When I had watch the Exorcist I almost pee on myself. I had nightmares, and my brother would scare me and do weird noises. I would cry 'cause I was scared. Even till now I cannot, I mean I cannot watch horror movies.

**-Young Hitters**

**From The Beat:** We know what you mean. We just saw one this week called "1408" (about a haunted hotel room), and we're still scared to go to a hotel!

## Do Whatever You Want With Your Pets

What up wit' The Beat, though? I'ma tell you like dis, Dogg. I been to a dogfight and it was crucial. I was in my old jets and two of my big homies brought their pit bulls out and made them fight. I forgot who won, but both dogs were bleeding all over.

I personally think dog fighting is a legitimate way of making money, 'cause a person should be able to use their pets for whatever they want. But the judge might say that's cruel treatment for an animal. If Vick was my homie, I'll ask, "Why is you fighting dogs when you got millions, you dummie!!"

**-Lil' Mims**

**From The Beat:** Do you really think it's all right to do anything you want to animals you own? Do you think people have the right to torture their animals? Vick is accused of electrocuting, shooting and otherwise killing his losing dogs. Is that all right too? Don't you think that people who have no heart for animals (who really can't defend themselves against the strongest of animals, human beings) find it easier to have no heart for their fellow men and women? Have you ever had a pet that you felt something for, that gave you love and comfort and depended on you for love and care? What do you think you owe for that kind of loyalty?



## Undoing The Past

What it do do Beat? Did 8-Ball. Dis time I'ma write 'bout life in da halls of YGC. I don't really like it in here. This sucks. The food taste like shhh. The clothes look like they been worn 1,000 times before ( which dey have). We stay in our rooms most of the time. We only come out for like two hours. To make it even worse, the shower don't even work. Drips come out the showerheads.

If I could go back in time, I wouldn't have done what I did to get in here. But I did what I had to do. Now what's done is done. I'm outs!

**-8-Ball**

**From the Beat:** Well, if you did what you HAD TO do, then going back in time wouldn't change anything, would it? Did you have to come to this place to know that it's a jail and a place that you wouldn't want to be? We doubt that. We think you just believed you wouldn't have to face the consequences. That kind of thinking worries us because we don't know if you've changed it or not. What do you think. Will you just go back out there and do what you "have to do" again. If so, then count on living the same consequences all over again... And if not, tell us what you plan to change.

## Da Block's Not A Game

When I get back to the block, I'm going to be smarter. Too many of my ninjas getting hit stupid about decisions. It feels like I'm playing chess when I'm out on the block. It's crazy right now out there in San Francisco. It's really not cool that I have to watch my back every day walking down my own street. Every decision I make have to be on Q. One slip-up, that might be your life.

When I was young, I thought this was all fun and games, but now I know that this is my life I'm playing with. I need to grow up and be on my stuff. That's just how part of my everyday life is.

**-QP**

**From The Beat:** Isn't it a strange thing that in a country that calls itself "the land of the free and the home of the brave," ordinary citizens are afraid to be out on the public streets, with certain parts of the cities they live in totally off-limits to them? What do you think it would take to make this country live up to its promise?

## RIP Choosey

The last person I knew who passed was ma boy Choose, RIP. He was shot. I never was able to talk to him before he passed, but when I found out, it was real, a cold game. But yeah man, we gone hold it down and keep it lit fa ma boy RIP Choosey bra. I'ma see you up there.

**-Zack DeeZ**

**From The Beat:** It's always tragic when we read these sad good-byes to young men who should still be living their lives in their prime. What will keeping it lit do for him? Absolutely nothing, except guarantee more of the same. The killings are tragic enough, but to use them to justify more of the same is not just tragic, it's catastrophic! It may be a comfort to you to believe you'll be joining Choosey in heaven, but how do you know that's where you'll end up?

## A Memorable Good-Bye

A good-bye that I remember is when ma ninja Ray Diddy passed away. It was shady because I was choppin' it up wit' him the day before he was killed. It was unexpected because he wasn't beefin' wit' no one (not that I know of ). I had to go to ma ninja funeral to show ma respect and to say ma good-bye to ma ninja. I will always remember him as a coo -ass friend.

RIP Ray Diddy.

**-Twon**

**From The Beat:** If he wasn't beefin', why do you think he paid so high a price? We're sorry he's left this world, but we're always sorry when we read pieces like this, which we do in every Beat. Think of all the young men who have been lost to the street violence, and picture that each one of them had someone like you who couldn't believe it and who continue to shed tears for their loss!

## Girl Fights

To me, a dog fight is just a girl fight. Both girls getting pumped up just like a dog getting roughed up (feel me). Like dogs bite other dogs and girls bite girls, and it's just crazy. But today was a bad day so I don't have really nothing good on my mind. I'm getting released Aug. 2. I'm out.

**-M Lene**

**From The Beat:** We are intrigued by your analogy to girl fights from dog fights. Do you ever feel like you or other girls are being manipulated into fighting by boys who have no more respect for you than for the dogs they fight? Is there anything you can do about it?

## TV Channels

First of all, I would like to say thank God for waking me up this morning to write this Beat paper. Amen.

Anyway, what's up Beat? Wha's crackin'? Me, just chillin' in my room wit' my roommate. You know we are eating a fat burrito right now. But anyway, let me jump to the subject. Coo'-coo', let's do it... LOL.

But anyway, I'ma talk about my family and my homies. On the first channel I turn to, I would like to see me and my family getting together and have a family reunion. The next channel I would like to see me and my thugs. I would like to see us chillin' in a big-ass crib, smoking a fat blunt and getting our money. And the famous channel I want to see myself on the block wit' my personal thugs. But I ain't gone get into details about my block. Just know that we the sickest individuals, ya dig.

Oh year, one more thing. Let me give a shout out to my brother. I love ya. Keep ya head up. And to my other ninja, love you too bra. We knock out time like it's nothing. I'm out.

**-Chunky**

**From The Beat:** The problem with "knocking out time like it's nothing" is that it's not nothing. It's something, and the more you give it up to strangers telling you everything, from when to pee to what to wear, the more "something" it becomes! We notice nothing in your channels about school, about work, about doing things for family (except the reunion, which does sound fun). We wish we could make you see that you are more important than your block. We wish we could make you see how important time really is before you're sitting for long years behind thick walls reminiscing about the good times you wish you could be having.

## My One And Only

Tell me

Why does my heart feel so much pain

Being away from the love of my life

Has me going insane

I don't know what to do without him

My heart can no longer with stand the hurt

If only I could kiss him again

If only he could hold me in his arms

And love me till the very end

Us being separated hurts so bad

It's making me feel so lonely

Because from the first day we met

I knew he was my one and only

I want to be with the man of my dreams

The type of man that will always make me feel special

Even with the littlest things

I know there's only one for me

He's the love of my life

He's my one and only

**-Lil' Muñeca**

**From The Beat:** And yet, despite your love, you did things that gave the system the power it needed to separate you from him. Why would you do that? What were you thinking? Will this separation change anything about the way you live your life, or are you one of those people who thinks that you can be slicker about what you do and avoid the consequences?

## RIP Big Bra Chedda

The last person who I'd lost was my god brother, Daniel, aka Chedda. The last good-bye I said to him was when I was very young. I don't really remember, but I do remember my god brother. The reason I don't really remember is because he did a long time in jail. Then when he got out, I went in.

But if I can rewind the hands of time, I would've took his place, put my feet in his shoes. I would like to say love you big bra.

**-Anton**

**From The Beat:** If you were to take his place, then he would be left to deal with the pain you're left to deal with. Wouldn't it be better if neither one of you had to take the place of the other, but found a way to live your lives without the beef that puts so many of you underground?

## Crazy

I can't deal with this insanity no more...

Playing the oldie tunes in my head...

Thinking of him...

Which brings tears to my eyes...

Mijo "I do love you"...

And I won't leave your sight...

I know this love of yours is here to stay...

I miss all his grumpy moments...

And of course all his loving...

Damn I miss my man...

Having deep conversations about life...

And what I remember the most is when we both...

Dazed out about dream cars...

Black '96 Impala...

I'm going crazy without him near...

But once I get out of the halls...

I ain't going to leave his sight...

He's the guy of my dreams...

He can count on me...

I'm his other half...

I can't take this no more...

I'm all alone...

But pray I'll soon be home...

To hold onto my man...

**-Vaga**

**From The Beat:** We hope that once your out, this love will keep you from returning to a place that's driving you crazy. But it's up to you...

## Dogs

Damn! What's wrong with stupid people these days making a big deal out of stupid dogs fighting and dying when actual human beings are dying every single day! It's like a couple of dogs die and the whole country goes ballistic! But when innocent people who live in poverty die from street violence, this pathetic country we live in doesn't give a shhh!

**-Angel**

**From The Beat:** There is a lot of truth in what you write, but there is also something missing. Can't you care both about the poor dumb animals who have no choice in what human beings make them do, and at the same time, also care for the people who are being hurt and killed on the daily? We believe that opening your heart for one contributes to feeling for the other. It seems to us that too many people in "this pathetic country" only care about their own people getting hurt or dying, as if one person's worth is greater than another's. In fact, we wonder if you don't feel like this too, that the loss of your homies is more important than the loss of "their" homies. Isn't the real problem that too many of us don't really care about "those people" (however you want to define "those people"), which makes it all the more likely that they wouldn't care about animals. The human heart is capable of enormous love and compassion, limited only by what we've been taught and how we've been conditioned.

## A Memorable Good-bye

I had to say good-bye to my big homie Monte. I had to say good-bye to him after he passed. When I went to his funeral, it was hard for me to say good-bye 'cause I knew it was the last time I'll ever see him again in person. It was a hard day for me and the rest of the homies. We went back to da block and got lifted. But I'm out Beat. Won't be writin' again. Getting out on court date.

**-Jay G**

**From The Beat:** Congratulations on getting out. Now, we hope we will be able to congratulate you for staying out!

## Passion Of Christ

Passion of Christ gives you chills...

It told it all...

Of how much Jesus suffered...

He suffered betrayal, pain, and torture...

Guess for who?

FOR US...

I realized God gave up his son for...

You and me...

Tears, blood, and flesh...

Is all I saw in Jesus' face...

Passion of the Christ...

Still gives me chills...

Pero tambien (But also)...

Gives me to think...

Of all the sins we all do...

**-Vaga**

**From The Beat:** It does seem very strange that if Jesus suffered all that for us, we give Him back so little. Do we show our respect for Christ when we go after "enemies" who, after all, were also created by the same hand? What do you think it will take for human beings to recognize that we are all in the same boat together and that unless we pull together, nothing good can happen.

## A Cold Heart!

A Heart... What is it made of and what can stop it? Me! And who is "me"? Young Illy, the heart of the street. Once I had a heart, but once I lost a friend that was so close to me. His name was John. He was like a brother. Once he left, my heart left and the beat in my heart left. I think it's livin' on ice 'cause when I do things I have no guilt after.

But since I came here, I found a place in my heart and it was my bra. RIP John John. He talked to me at night. He told me, "Bra, you can change! Don't end up like me." But I'm not gone lie, I am free.

**-Illy Ack**

**From The Beat:** We don't understand your last line, Illy Ack. What do you mean you're free? What are you not going to lie about? Does this mean that you aren't going to take John John's advice to heart? We hope you'll reconsider because we think he's 100% right. Change is inevitable. The only thing in question is whether you will control that change, or whether you will hand over control to others...

## A Memorable Good-Bye

I remember when my boy passed away. I was hella sad for hella long. I was hella stressing, feeling I had to go get my revenge. RIP Lil' Homie. I can't say the rest because you won't allow it.

**-Termite**

**From The Beat:** Your boy didn't just "pass away. That's too passive. He was killed. That's active! You're right, we won't allow you to use our pages to threaten revenge, but since we know what you wanted to say, let us say that a life for a life only leads to more lives for lives and then more and more and more... And that's what is happening in so many 'hoods right now, leaving fewer and fewer young black and brown men to carry on the future. This is the result of giving guns to children, and if we could take ALL the guns away from you and the other children killing each other, we would do it! But since we can't, we'll just keep reading these tragically sad pieces week after week.

## How Do I say Good-Bye?

Thinking about saying good-bye to my best friend is the worst thing to even begin to think about, but I believe that it is ultimately the best thing to do. I really need to stop our friendship because she's a great person and does not deserve to have friends that bring her down. I'm scared that if she continues to hang around me, she might go down my path. I just want the best for her.

**-Baby-C**

**From The Beat:** It's noble of you to want the best for her, but incomprehensible that you don't also want the best for yourself. Why do you love your best friend more than you love yourself? Why would you want to stop your friendship because you're afraid of bringing her down, but just continue with the life you know is bringing you down? Please explain. We just don't understand.

## Love My Life

I love my life. Man  
I love going out, Man  
And I love rapping, Man  
I love my life and what I do  
Rapping every day just for you tryna get paid  
Hear me too  
Tryna get money to stick like glue  
So what it do  
Just hit that gutta  
Don't sit around like your name was Buddha  
Gotta get money so we can do the thing in life you never do  
And we can have fun in every was  
And enjoy life in da Bay  
Grinning, hustle every day  
So I can be da goal to be heavy way

**-Kimberly**

**From The Beat:** We know you're a gifted rapper, Kimberly, but we would really like to read a piece by you that explains your raps in full sentences. Sometimes we have a hard time understanding what you're trying to tell us.

## Scary Movie

When I first seen the movie Jeepers Creepers, I was so damn scared, I was havin' nightmares for the longest. That movie tripped me out. I got chills through my spine and I almost peed my pants. And what was worse was I was alone in the dark! That shhh traumatized me!

**-Lil' Muñeca**

**From The Beat:** Did that make you stop going to scary movies? Wonder why we like to scare ourselves so much...

## In These Streets

Out here in these streets it's hard and cold  
Out here in these streets there's nowhere to go  
Out here in these streets is where the gutter at  
Out here in these streets is not where it's at  
Out here in these streets make you get locked up behind bars  
Out here in these streets will not get you far  
Out here in these streets selling your body, jumping in different cars to cars will not get you far  
Out here in these streets selling dope and weed is not a good thing to do  
But what you need to do is get on you knees and pray to God

**-Shanae**

**From The Beat:** Praying is a way of asking for help, and all of us need to ask for help much of the time. But are there other things that you and others can do to take you away from the gutter of the streets? What are you doing?

## My Baby

Well, I'm Constance and I am 17 years old. I have a two-year-old baby. She is one of the most cuties little things I ever seen. Her name is Sha'ron. I seem to enjoy playing with her every time I get a chance to play with. I seem to get so excited every time and so does she. It seems that we make stars in each other's eyes because we be so happy. My baby girl is very short and light skinned. You go girl.

**-Page**

**From The Beat:** Who is playin' with Sha'ron now that you've given your freedom up to this system? And a better question is, why would you put something even above this beautiful baby that needs her mother more than she needs anything else? When you get out of here, we hope you put your priorities back in the right order so that your baby is at the top of the list, and not some behavior that could lead you to be taken from her.

## The Top

Dis be young D-B  
You know she from the block  
She mess wit' dem ninjas  
'Cause she wit' it to the top  
I mean I go to different 'jects  
'Cause I got different spots  
But my ninja over here he just got popped  
Life out here ma  
People feel like view rocks  
It's the beef out here 'cause it's  
Stay up until it drops  
The thing killing is a crime it's a scene  
'Cause it's pain and fear  
It throws people lifes in hurtful crimes

**-D-M**

**From The Beat:** We can't really tell from this piece if you are proud of the spots you have in those different projects, or whether you want out of a life that leads to prison or to death. Where do you see yourself in five years, and how do you see yourself getting there from here.

## My Son

I love my son. I want to be with him. When I get out I going to get me a job because I want to make my mom happy that her son changed his life. I pray to God to bless me. I want my son to know that he got a good daddy. I what to give my son something that I never got. That what I want to do.

**-AJ**

**From The Beat:** We hope you get to be home with your son soon — and more important, we hope you give up whatever it is that gives the system power to take you from him. He needs you as much as you need him.

## RIP Spank

Man, I miss you so much. Why did you up and go like that? Every time I go to the street, I cry. I wish I can see you, hug you. I love you bra so much. I wish I was there to help you. Man, yo' lil' sis be cryin' every night.

Sometime I be like I want to kill myself, but now I be like I'm going to be ok. I know you are looking down on me. I'm in YGC going crazy 'cause I'm in here for some dumb shhh. When I get out, I'm staying out.

Love ya bra, and I'm going to keep my head up. Love Lil' Bizzy.

**-Missia**

**From The Beat:** Why do we read stories like this week after week? We're sorry about your loss, but it's not just your loss. It's a loss for everyone when bright, strong young people end up losing their lives to the gun violence that is bound to occur when children carry guns. Do you have any suggestions to reduce or end this violence?

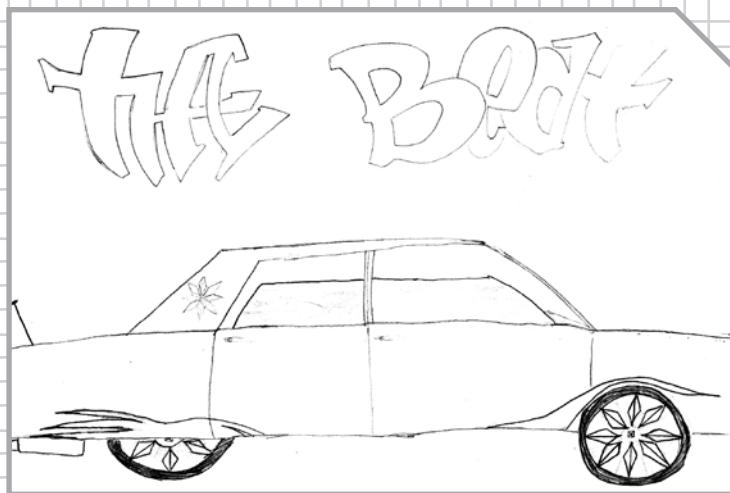


## My Thing For You

My thing is to be a kid, to have fun like kids should. Not to be lock up like a dog because kids are not animals and people should really know that. But if you did something to be here, then you have to do time because you did the crime. So kids, what I am saying kids, please don't go to jail because it will be like hell and you won't have fun like you should when you are out. So kids do good and remember to do your own thing.

**-Jenkins**

**From The Beat:** We hope you take some of your own advice, because you don't need to be here instead of having fun out there. But be careful about that advice "to do your own thing," because sometimes that "thing" is exactly what leads you here.



## A Kiss To The Girl In My Dreams

This is a kiss to the girl in my dreams. You're like a diamond, you got this special glow. I gotta have you. I'm addicted to you like a dope fiend's addicted to crack. I gotta have you. You got me happy like a kid waking up on his birthday.

Every time I see you in my dreams, I go crazy, man. I need some of that green sticky stuff to calm me down, 'cause I'm going insane. I need you in my life, like a heroin addict needs heroin to make it through the day. I need you, but for now this is just a kiss to the girl in my dreams.

**-G Menace**

**From The Beat:** Does she know how you feel about her? Why don't send her a copy of this Beat to her with your poem in it? Or cut it out and mail it?

## I'm Still Missing

When I heard the news  
I felt like I was stabbed  
My best friend Eddie, was shot  
I couldn't think day and night  
I asked myself why  
Why did this happen  
To me I still don't understand  
I loved him like my brother  
And I miss him every day  
I love you Eddie

**-Kimberly**

**From The Beat:** When you ask yourself why this happened, what answers do you come up with? We are truly interested in those answers because this tragedy you describe just keeps going on and on. What can you tell us?

*Oh, beautiful lady  
Your charisma is amazing*

## Beautiful Lady

Beautiful lady  
You drive me crazy  
From the shape of yo' lips  
To the sway in yo' hips  
Feeling like my heart skips beats  
When our lips touch  
You make me jittery  
Like two ropes in double dutch  
If you would let me feel  
Your special touch  
I can't explain  
The feeling inside me  
I cry  
But not on the outside  
I would love to see your blouse fly  
High off love  
So our souls  
Float to the sky  
Beautiful lady  
Pretty in pink  
If I could  
I'd write this poem  
With my blood  
In ink  
Oh, beautiful lady  
Your charisma is amazing  
The way you turn heads  
You're drop gorgeous dead  
I mean, drop dead gorgeous  
Your pretty eyes  
Remind me  
Of a pure soul  
I'll be your slave forever  
And feed you out  
My fruit bowl  
Beautiful lady  
You are my queen  
And if you ever needed one  
I'd give you my spleen  
The way you walk  
The way you talk  
You are very special  
Created by a god  
And if possible  
I'd give you my child  
All about passionate love making  
But we could get wild  
Beautiful lady  
With the perfect body  
You'd turn a gay man straight  
Curves in all the right places  
So never lose weight  
In hell or heaven  
I'll see you, my queen  
For eternity I'll wait  
Just to make you scream

**-Dark Side**

**From The Beat:** This is a very delicate, subtle and sensuous. You would do anything for a woman you love. Why don't you send this poem to the lady who inspired it?

## My Dream

I had a dream that one day I'd be living a productive life. My dream is to own a two story, four bedroom, two bathroom, one garage home in San Jose.

In my dream I'm married to a beautiful Cambodian woman. We have three kids – two boys and a girl.

In my dream I have a career in counseling and my wife has a career in something.

I own 2 cars.

In my dream I still gang bang, still ride for the hood, still do big things, but I'm playing the game differently.

This is my dream and I really want it like this.

**-Avalani**

**From The Beat:** We're each entitled to our dreams. Yours sounds pretty good. We wonder, though, how you reconcile gang banging. We have the sense that you're talking about a different kind of gang banging, a style that helps people, perhaps. Do you see yourself helping kids who might be in danger of slipping off the right path? Tell us more.

## It Took Me So Long

There are some things I still don't understand. When I was younger, I just didn't listen. I kept on getting locked up, and messing up. Now I'm going to do 18 months at Alternative. I finally realized what I did was wrong. The people that really care for me are my family. I'm in this alone, so my homies didn't come in here. I came in here by myself – just me and my real loved ones. I don't care what people say. It took me this long to find this out.

**-Avalani**

**From The Beat:** They say: better late than never. It sounds like you have finally figured some things out. Now comes the test. We wish you the best.

## A Memorable Goodbye

If I could say goodbye to somebody it would be my moms. I didn't get to say goodbye to her when she passed. But deep down in my heart, I know she knows that I loved her. I know I loved her well. I try not to stress about my moms, because I know she's in heaven with God and that I am being watched, more fully, not only by her, but by God. But I want to give some advice to for anyone who has lost a parent. Get some grieving counseling, because it's the hardest thing to get through. Everyone in here – God bless.

**-Merino**

**From The Beat:** Your moms would be very proud of you right now. You've come a long way, just since we've known you from our weekly visits. We are very sorry for your loss. We are very impressed with your growth as a person.

## Dog Fights

Dog fights isn't alright

But when you see the action it's tight  
Day or night, either way it's not alright

You might think is' a good fight

Bites and blood, it's a bad sight

Maybe funner than flying a kite

Or watching a four on four fight

Being bad or being nice

These dogs are just like ice

So it might be tight or a good fight

But it's a bad sight and it ain't nice.

**-King Slim**

**From The Beat:** One of the ugliest things about those fights isn't just the violence of the dogs, but also the bloodthirsty looks people have in their eyes while they're watching the fights. It brings out the cruel in people. You did a great job describing that fever in this poem. Have you seen fights before?

## Chucky

What's up Beat? This is R praying to get out soon. I remember when I saw a scary movie. It was Chucky. I was 6 years old when I saw it.

I was scared because my sister had a lot of dolls. The thing that scared me was a doll talking and killing people. If I saw the movie now it would not be scary, because now I know that dolls don't talk.

**-R**

**From The Beat:** There's another movie with a scary toy called Poltergeist. Check it out when you get the chance and tell The Beat what you thought of it!

## Stay On The Right Track

"Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there."

You don't understand, do you? Please allow me to explain. My opinion about this phrase is this: even if you are doing something good, you can still screw yourself over.

Let me give you an example. Pretend you are about to run a marathon. This is a good thing, right? OK, now pretend you hang around the house drinking, smoking and getting high, instead of training every day. You have officially screwed yourself over. It is now the day of the 26.2 mile race. Since you didn't train, you make it about six miles and then collapse from dehydration and exhaustion. You get rushed to the hospital and you fail to finish the marathon.

Alrighty then. See ya. More next week.

**-Kitsune**

**From The Beat:** So, even if your intentions are good, you won't succeed if you sit around on your keester. Is that what you mean?

## Nightmare on Elm Street

What's happening? This is Ghost, waiting to go the ranch.

Well what I'm writing about today is when I first saw a horror movie. It was when I was about 7 years old, I saw a movie called Nightmare on Elm Street.

It scared the shhh out of me because after it was over it took me a long time to go to sleep when I went to sleep I had a nightmare about Freddy poking my sister's eyes out of her socket and making me eat them well that's all today so see you next week.

**-Ghost**

**From The Beat:** That image you saw that night might give us nightmares too! Do you think seven is too young to see a movie like that? Did it take you a long time to get over being scared of it?

## What I Don't Understand

What I don't understand is the system putting twelve year old kids in juvy. From my experience, it doesn't help them. It makes them worse because gangbangers influence them. And they start claiming fame for having been locked up. But what I know now is that that stuff is messed up. I wish I would have listened to my parents and not been so uncontrollable. I think the system is set up for failure.

**-Merino**

**From The Beat:** There are many folks who are part of the system who read The Beat regularly. That's why it is important for you to write 'real' pieces like this one. People read, people listen. They think about what you say. Eventually, changes get made, and sometimes for the benefit of everyone. So keep thinking about your experiences and keep sharing your thoughts. We are pleased to see the positive changes you've been going through.

## That Made Me Jump

I saw a lot of horror movies. The thing is that I get scared but I don't show it. I can't show it. I may jump a little, but that's it. I have to stand my ground for the lil' ones and ladies at the movies.

The movie that made me jump the most is the Saw 3. I went with my lil' bro and sisters. We all snuck in and had a good time.

Well I'm tired, I'm crashing out now.

**-Lil' Dreamer**

**From The Beat:** How old are your brother and sisters? They must really look up to you, it probably made them feel safer to see that you weren't stressing too hard?

## Stare Out My Window

I stare out the window wondering where you are,

But all I see is the stars witch are greatly far

I think of you every day and every night

Even though you're never in my sight

I know you and me were meant to be

Were like a mix of alaze and Hennessy

I thank God for making you mine

Only because we fit just fine

I can't express my love for you in any kinds of words

I just wish that we could fly away like beautiful birds

I love everything about you and the way you are

You're as beautiful as a night full of lovely stars

I love you because you've been with me through good and bad

You may not think so, but when I'm away from you I'm really sad Well I'm gonna end this. Te amo

**-Creepier**

**From The Beat:** We think you spelled "alaze" wrong, but we can't find what you meant, so we left it there. More important is this love you have because it makes us wonder why you risked losing it for whatever it was you did that was more important than her. Before you can fly like beautiful birds, you have to find a way to get out — AND STAY OUT — of the bird cage you're in...

## That Horror Movie

The horror movie that scared the shhh out of me was "Freddy Kruger." I was about five years old the first time I seen the movie. That night, damn it was hard to fall asleep! I was under the covers sweating, wishing I didn't watch the movie. The scariest thing about the movie was that Freddy killed everybody in the dreams! That demon had a scary face. That is the horror movie that scared the shhh out of me.

**-Freddy (Not)**

**From The Beat:** Have you seen the movie since you got older? How are you when you see it now? Does it still scare you? Have you witnessed things in your life as scary as a movie?

## Dogfight

I remember there was houses dat were empty. We used to get the usos dog and da other homie's dog and take them in dat empty apartment to let them ninjas beat on each other up until they can't get back up. Then, after they fight, we just get them gone. But yeah, it is all right to make fast money. Aight then.

**-Giant Samoa**

**From The Beat:** So, from reading this, we assume that it doesn't bother you that guards at some of our state prisons got caught doing the same thing to prisoners. They deliberately put rival gang members on the same small yard, then bet on who would win. They finally broke up the fights with gunshot, and then said there was nothing wrong with it. We guess you agree.

## Samoan Fa'a — Bye

Well, I had to say good-bye to a lot of usos who passed in theses sa rough years, and all the others as well. But the main people was my cousin, Big Al aka Bricc Wall. And my grandmamma, To'aiva Savia Niko Iosefa.

For my cousin, he like taught me how to be a man and stand up for myself and my fam-bam (you feel). and he raised me on these streets even when my parents was not there. Dat's why he's my man. And my grandma, she always told me in Samoan, "Go to school and finish it. And stop getting locked up." But I just did not listen. It went in one ear and out the otta. But that's why I love her.

All right big usos and my Samoan queen, I'll see you when it my turn to bend dat corner. Sa love. Fa'a (bye).

**-Giant Samoa**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry about your cousin and your grandma. But words of love are very easy to say, when acts of love are much harder to do. You ignored your grandmas advice when she was alive, but you still know what that advice is. (If she could come and spend five minutes with you now, what do you think she would be telling you? And would you just be telling her that you love her, without any real likelihood that you'd follow her excellent advice? That's what we mean when we say words are easy...)

## Dead Time

Just waiting for my next court date to arrive. In my cell just doing some dead time. Let me tell you, everyday I sit in my cell thinking about on the outs.

**-New Booty**

**From The Beat:** What are you thinking about the outs? Doing the same kind of things that put you here, or something new so that you won't have to face any dead time in the future?

## The Fallen Falcon

To my homie Michael Vick, ey, what where you thinking G? Ey, I heard that you got caught up running illegal dogfights at your home and you're facing six years in the pen and you're losing all your endorsements with Nike. And ey, what's up you having pit bull fights? It's not like you need money or anything. I guess it a kind of hobby for you.

I thought football was your thing. You have little kids looking up to you and you are one of best selling jerseys in the NFL. You played for a pretty cool team, and the one thing I want to say is good luck in your court case.

**-Big Kid**

**From The Beat:** This is a good letter, and we thank you for writing it the way the topic asked you to. We'd love to know what he was thinking when he risked so much for so little. Maybe we'll find out in the trial. What do you think will happen in his case?

## That Horror Movie

The first horror movie I saw was a movie about clowns that put you in a bubble and suck the blood out of you. I was like five, and that scared the shhh out of me. I guess it was easy because at that age everyone grows a fear of clowns.

If I were to see that movie now it wouldn't faze me because now I have lost those childhood fears and gained real ones, like will I spend the rest of my life in prison?

**-Jhon Doe**

**From the Beat:** We're not sure if you meant to spell John the way you did (Jhon), so we left it. But what you've written is chilling itself. Yes, the horrors of real life can be so much scarier than any movie. We assume that if you are facing a possible life term, then someone who was living on this earth is no longer living here. That is a horror story too, for all who loved him, just like what you fear is a horror story for all that love you. Good luck.



## A Memorable Good-Bye

Aye, what up Beat? It's yo' boy Evek from the max, still here wastin' my life, stuck in here. Well, le me get started on this topic.

A memorable good-bye to a loved one of mine... well, since I've been here, my grandfather has been sick, and about six months ago, my dad just stopped talkin' about my grandfather. So it just came as weird to me. So what I did, which is stupid of me, is I just stopped askin' about my grandfather. So now, to this day, I think he has gone on to a better place up there with our loving God.

So this is my good-bye to my grandpa. He was a nice, warm-hearted man. He was my grandpa. I love you, Grandpa. May you Rest In Peace.

**-Evek**

**From The Beat:** It's nice to have warm memories of a "warm-hearted man" who was your grandpa. But it does seem a little strange that you would just assume he's gone without asking the hard question. Are you trying to protect your father, yourself, who? By the way, even if you have to spend long years locked up, that doesn't mean you're wasting your life. That's still a matter of the choices you make, whether inside or out.

## That Scary Barney

Wassup y'all? Well, I'm gon write about a horror movie I've seen that scared the you know what out of me. Check me out, dough. When I was little I watched this scary-ass movie called Barney, wit' the big-ass purple dinosaur. Cousin, that big-ass thang always scared me. But now when I see it, I see like damn good thang I ain't naver watched it 'cause when I see it that there hella (tai-pu).

Well y'all, it's about that time so I'm gon end this wit' a "I love you long time." (fa'a soifua) to everybody. Stay( malos) strong. Sa love.

**-Tiny Samoa**

**From The Beat:** We're not sure if you're being serious or just playing with us. Barney? But you know, at a certain age, most anything can frighten us, even if it's meant to make us laugh. (We have to ask you this question, TS: Is Samoan love different than any other kind of love?)

## When I'm Out

When I get out I'm gonna feel like a free person even though I'll be on probation. The main thing is that I don't are if I get probation to get out. Right now I want to see my family that I miss so bad. Yeah, I talk to them on the phone but that's not the same thing.

When I get out of here I am going to do everything opposite of what I did to get in this dump. I'm just not going to do bad and I really regret it with all my heart because this is the worst place I've ever been and I would have never thought I would be here eating the nastiest food I have ever eaten in my life for a long period of time. I will not be seen in here again I know that for a dead fact.

**-Anthony**

**From The Beat:** Of course you'll feel free, yet you won't be free unless you fulfill the obligations to yourself and the courts. Best of luck! Tell us in detail what makes juvenile so bad, and what is your plan to staying out?

## Dog Fight

I've never been to a dog fight, but I'd like to.

It's kind of messed up, but it would be cool to watch. If they made it a sport it would be pretty controversial, but if they could regulate it then it would be okay. I'm not sure how they could do that though.

**-Monk**

**From The Beat:** Not in this day and age will dog fighting ever become a "sport."

## I Speak

What's up to all those on their bed reading my section of The Beat. Bet you're hungry huh, workout or something, read a book.

Well, I'm tryin' to post bail. This investigator hasn't got back to me wit' these new charges. My PO's' pressuring the "supposive" victim to press charges.

I'm gonna keep it solid tho' ya know what I'm saying. I miss the squad, but they goofing.

Haven't been writing that much, only to a couple of ninjas. I'm telling you ninjas ain't loyal nowadays, cats is in it for themselves. Why get put on if you know you don't got the heart for it. Sucka ninjas, keep to yo' self. Well hopefully, I'm not here next week.

**-Edgar**

**From The Beat:** Oh Edgar, no one is loyal to the hood, and that is what keeps the criminal justice system alive, so many people ratting each other out. Take a look at the ninjas you talk about, and look at the Mike Vick story, someone is always talking.

## Clowns That Wouldn't Die

I don't remember the title of the movie but I remember these crazy looking clowns, big and ugly with sharp ass teeth. The clowns would wrap people in cotton candy and suck their blood through a crazy straws. It was scary because even a shotgun couldn't kill the bastards they just kept coming. It turned out the clowns were aliens and they took on that shape so they'd be less suspicious.

**-Blizz**

**From The Beat:** Whew, that's one scary and unforgettable flick!

## Gone In The Wind

SA love to all my usos and tuafafiens that's gone in the wind

Got love for all my usos that's doin' life in the pen

But I'll tell you this y'all... to the Lord I pray

All my usos and tuafafines will see each other some day

But in the meantime I'm gon kick back and relax

While I take this forty and pour some for all our dead homies

Rest in peace to you and yours

Even dough you don't know me...

(to be continued...)

**-Tiny Samoa**

**From The Beat:** The sadness for your homies who are "gone in the wind" is understandable, and it is the same sadness we read about in every issue of The Beat. Everyone feels the same pain and cries the same tears when their loved ones are lost — whether they're from one side of the street or the other, one side of town or the other, one country or another. Our pain is human pain, and all of it is to be respected.

## That Horror Movie

The first horror movie I ever saw was "Exorcist." It scared the shhh out of me. I was only six or seven years of age. I was with my friend and brother when I seen it. I remember when she is in he barn and she is screaming all these demons' names out. All of it seem so real, and I couldn't sleep. I always thought I was going to get possessed.

If I were to see the movie now, I would just look at it like another movie. And at night, I would just go to sleep like a baby. I figured out that it is all in your head.

**-Possessed**

**From The Beat:** (You forgot to give us your name, so we had to make one up for you...) We remember when we saw the Exorcist, and it was a scary movie. You're right, movie emotions are all in your head, but what about those scary things you have seen in real life? How do you handle those?

## Dreams

Even in my dreams I'm in these walls,  
even the people in here are in my dreams.  
Even in my dreams I can't escape my imprisonment.  
But there are good dreams  
when I'm with my family, just living on the outs.  
I've had twice as many dreams of being locked up then  
me being free.  
And when I awake, I wake up to a nightmare,  
not much of a nightmare but a bad dream.  
A bad dream that is my life.

**-Blizz**

**From The Beat:** Powerful statement about your dreams and what it is you are thinking about. Blizz, how can you turn this nightmare into a positive?

## Freddy Krueger

What's cracking? Me just right here posted up in this so called "max" unit waiting to go to court.

Today's topic is about a scary movie, well Beat whenever I was younger and I use to watch Freddy Krueger. I wouldn't be able to go to sleep, that movie was really scary at the time. I was about 9 or 10 years old and me and my younger sister were watching it this one time with my older cousins. I think if I were to watch Freddy Krueger now I wouldn't be scared anymore because I know it's all fake and it's just a movie.

Well Beat that's it for tonight. So until pencil meets paper sincerely, Jonny.

**-Jonny**

**From The Beat:** You are not alone for allowing the one and only Freddy Krueger to scare the pants off of you.

## My Horror Movie

Hey Beat was cracking? As for me just posting up in the max waiting for court.

Well I'm writing about a horror movie. A movie that scared the shhh out of me when I was little was Freddy Krouger. Man I remember watching it with my older brothers, and they use to scare me on purpose then I would start to cry like a little sissy. Especially the part when he appears in the dreams, shhh I wouldn't even go to sleep. But now that I see it's wack it seems hella fake I think it's because when you're little you believe everything and now that I think back when I was small I crack myself up.

Well that's all for today Beat.

**-Lil' Knuckles**

**From The Beat:** Absolutely, being young and innocent, can bring a lot of fear, especially from your older brothers. Would you do it to your children or to your little brother if you have one?

## See Ya When I See Ya

I never really said goodbye to my dad  
because of the view of my dad at my young age.  
It was hard enough to try to forget him. But I'd tell him  
that I would miss him and I would've liked to hear some  
of his stress.

I'm gonna try to be the best man that he wanted me to be.

Just a simple good bye.

**-Blizz**

**From The Beat:** Just the few words you share with us, we can imagine how hard it was for you to have your dad leave your young life. From where you sit today we can also imagine you to being one special father to your child when your time is right.

## Goodbye

What's good wit' you Beat? Well this Rude Boy coming from the max.

Well I really, really cared about this girl. Her name should not be said. I was deeply in love with this girl. I know I told myself I would never fall, I gotta keep it cutthroatish. But for some reason this girl made a killer impact on my life.

I did everything with her, I had to be with her every day. She was stuck in my head all day. And to be honest with you I was lightweight sprung, ha-ha. You can call me a simp but one day you'll meet that one you thought was for you but wasn't.

This same girl I loved, did me dirty behind my back. I know I cheated but she did some real scandalous shhh. I forgive her for that, but in order to leave I have to. The only reason why is 'cause she's tryin' to press charges. But I wish her the best.

Now I got this new girl that meets all my high standards. I really think she is that one. She writes me all the time. I'm out on this one. Stay coo'.

**-Edgar**

**From The Beat:** It's a shame that a relationship falls into the hands of the criminal justice system, though unfortunately it happens all the time. We hope both of you can move on from this experience, and it sounds like you have, best!

## Screw Dog Fighting!

I think dog fights should be illegal. It is messed up how they kill the dogs. That's crazy how people would use dogs like that just to make some money.

Vick ain't goin' get locked up because he has hella money, but that's coo' that they kicked him out of the NFL because he shouldn't of been torturing those dogs like that.

Everybody liked Michael Vick because he's a good football player but now they are goin' look at him as a different person now because of what he did to those dogs.

That's just my opinion that dog fighting should be illegal because they like to see dogs fight and also bet money on the fights to get money.

**-Screw Vick**

**From The Beat:** Vick will probably serve some time when he is sentenced in December, and we wouldn't be surprised that he comes back to the NFL after his stint in prison. We shall see.

## My Real Life Horror Movie!

Tell directors and producers to take my life and make a movie

For all those individuals who never knew me

No sensors or exaggerations

And it's still guaranteed to be scarier than Jason

Heart pacin' faster than a Nascar racin'

'Cause evil spirits and demons is what I'm facin'

My horror movie is more than just scary, it's more of a fascination

And to understand it will take full concentration

But I warn ya' it may just cause some mental devastation

Every night went to sleep fearing Freddy

The hell's a tooth fairy.

**-Castro**

**From The Beat:** Castro when you are ready, now is the time to write your story and over time maybe you can sell it as a movie. YOU know the early days, you know today, but what does tomorrow hold? You have the key to the future of this movie, and we hope it is not a horror movie, but a movie full of hope and promise. A story that inspires the next generation.

## Magical People IN The Hall

I believe that some of the most magical people I know are the counselors, nurses, and advisers who work in juvenile hall. They are somewhat magical because of the patience displayed by them.

I am 18 years old and this is my first time in juvi, and I would never imagine the level of immaturity that the kids show. I could not imagine having to restrain, handcuff, and calm kids' crazy personalities everyday as they do. I really respect the staff here, and hope someday that I could have the patience level and love for the job that they display, day in and day out.

**-Camelia**

**From The Beat:** Three cheers to you for noticing. There are lots of other jobs your counselors could work at. They chose their jobs because they feel a mission to serve you guys. We're glad you appreciate it. Get out, and don't come back.

## Put Your Mind To It

"If you think you can or think you can't, you're right."

I feel this phrase is true.

I want to succeed in life.

If I keep thinking I can, I will probably succeed.

But if I say I can't, no matter how hard I try, I will fail. Basically, if you put your mind to it you can do anything.

If you want to fail every goal, think negative.

If not, think POSITIVE. Later!

**-Kitsune**

**From The Beat:** So, tell us what you want to succeed at, and tell us about your plan to get where you want to go.

## The Scariest Movie Is "It"

I think the scariest movie I seen was "It." When I first seen the movie I was 12 years old it was just scary because the clown will just pop out of nowhere and then at night I would have weird dreams with him in them but he would always go away.

One night I decided to go into my room alone and watch the movie by myself and I would always jump and my aunt, my grandma and grandpa would always knock on the door and ask if everything was alright and I would always say, "yes I'm fine." Then I would always fall asleep through the movie and never think about in anymore.

**-Eduardo**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you painfully worked through "It," by watching it alone in your room. What a scary movie!

## Dog Fight

I think that dog fights should be illegal because I don't think dogs should be in fights to death and then kill them by drowning them or electrocuted them or other ways to torture a dog to death.

The guy, Mike Vick, responsible for this act should get a 25 to death penanty for having over five-hundred dead dogs in his back yard.

I think the court should not give him a chance to bail out of prison and he should give the same sentence to the people that are also responsible for the killing of many dogs. Dog fighting should not be legal because dogs are really good animals and they are really helpful and after all they're man's best friend.

**-Silencer**

**From The Beat:** Mr. Law Enforcement, we understand you want to give him the death penalty, but we think if anything he can do much better in his community by speaking out against dog fighting and that we hope he will do once he finishes his jail sentence whatever it is.

## Who's Got Game?

My American dream is to play basketball in the NBA and buy my family house and have my own family and be a good father to my kids.

**-Martin**

**From The Beat:** We think you have a decent chance for three out of four of your dreams. We hope so, anyway. Truth is, much of that depends on how hard you're willing to work.

## What The Hell Was Vick Thinking?

First of all I think that Mike Vick should be on trial for more time then he is facing, but what the hell was he thinking? I mean did he actually think that he was going to get away with it? How did he think that they wouldn't find the 600 dogs dead bodies in his back yard. If anything he should get at least twenty-years for doing that!

The law should raise the penalty on that. He took so many animals lives.

If I could I would do it to him! What he did to the dogs! Then I would be no better than him. I think he should get a week for every dog he killed! If I can get two months for being with someone I am not supposed to be with how come he can't get at least ten years for taking six-hundred dogs?

**-Lock Vick Up!**

**From The Beat:** We will see how much time Vick will get when he is sentenced in December. We're sure it won't be ten years, but it this episode will forever destroy a once very promising football career. We hope he becomes the number one advocate against dog fighting and puts his big dollars into saving animals!

## Vick and Dog Fighting

The law about dog fighting is a good one! You cannot treat an animal that way! Also dogs have rights too! I think Vick should go to jail, at least a decade, because there is so much evidence to prove he is guilty. He should be responsible for the actions that happened on his property.

**-Eduardo**

**From The Beat:** We had a hard time reading this piece, so we did our best to get most of what you spoke about in this piece. We know one thing you're not a Vick lover, and you're most definitely a supporter of animals rights! Good for you!

## Mars Attacks

When I was young I watched all kinds of Horror Movies: Freddy Kruger, vampire movies, etc. but the only movie that scared me was "Mars Attacks." It was suppose to make fun of a lot of Alien movies, but it really freaked me out. I was about eight. After that I was hella paranoid about aliens. I used to take a dagger to bed just in case they tried to get me. Thinking back though, I don't remember where I got that knife from.

**-Monk**

**From The Beat:** Did you get that knife out of the kitchen?

## A Scary Real Movie

One of the scariest movies I ever seen was real life. I was really young and I used to see my mom get abused by my dad. I tried to stop my dad but he would push me away that was a pretty scary movie.

**-Jr.**

**From The Beat:** Oh that's a movie we wish no one had to experience. We're sorry and we do hope your mom is in a safe place now and your dad has better control of his rage.



## What's Up Beat

I'm still here. I didn't go nowhere. Now I am in this other unit. I didn't write to The Beat Within for a long time. By the time you come again, I may be here or not. I am going to a group home. I've been here 8 months. I didn't get out. I have been in the hall the whole time. They won't let me out of here. I am going to a group home for three years and a half. If I do good in the group home I will go home. I am in here. I didn't go anywhere. I need to go now. I will write more next time. Stay up.

**-Luis**

**From The Beat:** Ok Luis. If you leave before we get back, you can write to us from your group home and tell us how your life is going.

## The Scariest Movie

The scariest movie I saw when I was little was "It." I think I was about eight or ten at the time. The other thing that was scary was that he only goes for kids and I was at that age.

Well the scene that was scary was when the little brother was playing with the paper boat on the curb and the boat fell into the gutter and the clown grabbed it. Then the clown told the kid he can get it back if he gives him his hand then the clown bit his hand. I think if I saw that scene now I wouldn't be as scared.

**-Xnortoriousviet**

**From The Beat:** Oh man, that's one scary scene that would shake up any youngster.

## RIP Homie

There was a time when the homeboy and I were chillin' with some hood girls and drinkin', having a good time. But after the girls left, he got all sad-cheeked and I sat down to talk to him. He was telling me about his lady and family problems and I was like: "Damn, that's bad." It hurts me because I've been through it too. So after all that we walked to his pad because he didn't feel like walking home alone.

The next day his lady called me crying and broke the news to me that he hung himself and she found him. But all I really wanted to say is: I love you bro, much respect and love to his family. R.I.P Bugzy

**-Alex**

**From The Beat:** Wow, this is such an intense story. It sounds like you were a good friend until the end though and really listened and cared about your friend's issues. Sometimes, that's all we can do.

## A Memorable Good-bye

What's good, Beat readers? This be your girl Laughter, getting released August 10th. Anywho, I'm here to talk about my brother. RIP ELMO! Here today, gone tomorrow. My heart is full of pain and sorrow. Not only were you my best friend, you were my big brother. It was too soon for you to go away. I never got to say what I wanted to say: I hope you and all the homeboys in heaven are good. We miss all you homeboys in the hood. To Speedy, Smokey and you, too. You all left too fast.

I don't know what to do. Gone without you saying good-bye, why did you have to go and die? Seems like God wanted his homeboy back. Just know that I love you and I want you back. RIP Elmo: March 18, 1988-Oct. 28 2006

**-Laughter**

**From The Beat:** There is nothing like the relationship between brother and sister, especially when that familial bond is blessed with true friendship. With so many losses in your community, how will you honor the dead as you move forward in life? Nothing honors the dead like life.

## Magical People

"Magical people," are people who are always there for you, people who are positive role models. Some kids refer to their parents as being "magical people". They are always there with me through thick and thin - problems I have, they're there.

**-Darrill**

**From The Beat:** You're a lucky guy.

## I Hate Clowns!

The topic today is the scariest movie I've ever seen is when I was nine years old and I watch this movie call "IT" and it was pretty scary because the clown was killing everyone in the town and he was coming for the little kids and he would kill them and he could go in your dreams and that what scared me and also because I did like clowns.

**-Anti-clown**

**From The Beat:** We'd hate clowns too.

## Blabbin'

One thing I don't understand is why do these stupid ass kids that never been through shhh, never put in work think they can just start bangin 'cause it sounds coo. Me as an active gang member, I got to take care of these fools. This is just what was on my mind today. Stay up to all in this place.

**-S**

**From The Beat:** We all have a need to belong to a community, to feel that we are a part of something larger than ourselves. But it really matters which communities we choose. In your case, you chose a gang. At one time, your own motives may have been very much like the kids you seem to feel contempt for. We wish you'd chosen a different community to become a part of. And we hope the youngsters you're complaining about will make a better choice, too. You could help yourself and the kids you're complaining about by patiently telling them the truth about gang life. They think it's cool. If you're honest with yourself, and with them, you can tell them what else it is.

## A Memorable Good-bye

My grandpa was living with us for five years, in and out of the hospital. One day he went to the hospital. I thought he would be fine. We visited him, I said goodbye. I thought he would be back the next day. My mom woke me up around 12:30 a.m., crying. She told me what happened. I couldn't believe it. The really sad thing was he knew he was going to pass. He only told my dad. It was the worst thing I ever had to go through.

**-Michael**

**From The Beat:** You are lucky that you got to spend that five years with your grandfather, even though he was sick. How strange that people can sometimes know when they are going to pass from this world.

## Dog Fight

I never been to a dogfight but I do think it should be illegal 'cause it's crazy to watch and you make money off it. But Vick shouldn't have done it - he was already making millions and now he messed it all up and might get locked up 4 to 6 years. What a dumb ass! He deserves to get locked up for being stupid. He's already a millionaire with everything.

**-A Raider Fan**

**From The Beat:** Hmmm, does your football loyalties to the Raiders make you feel like coming down harder on Vick? The big thing does seem to be that Vick didn't need to run this ring to make money. Why do you think he did it?

## Velasquez

Well today I going to write about someone that has helped when I was on EMP. He always told me not to smoke and not to drink and he told me not to cut my house arrest, but I didn't listen to him. I still did it and ended up in here. Sometimes, I wish I had someone like him all the time. Well, love – if you ever come across this – I love you Michael and thanks for everything.

**-Stephanie**

**From The Beat:** Why is it so hard to listen to the people who love us and look out for us? It is often only in retrospect that we realize how much that person was really looking out for us. Are you still in touch with Michael? Do you think you'll follow his advice when you get out of here?

## My Lost Key

I had closed the door upon my heart  
and wouldn't let anyone in  
I had trusted and loved only to be hurt, but  
that would never happen again

I had locked the door and tossed the  
key as hard, and as far, as I could  
love would never enter there again  
my heart was closed for good

Then you came into my life and made  
me change my mind, just when I  
thought that tiny key was impossible to find

That's when you held out your hand  
and proved to me I was wrong  
inside your palm was the key to my heart  
you had it all along

**-Cupcake**

**From The Beat:** This is a beautiful poem – again, showing that sensitive side that you keep so well hidden. It is great to see you really stretching your creative writing skills.

## Dog Fight

I think what Michael Vick was doing was half alright and half not. I think dogfights is ok! But killing the dog is not ok. I think instead of killing the dog I think he should have put them to sleep!

**-Confused**

**From The Beat:** Putting a dog to sleep is killing a dog!!

## Dog Fight

I do not believe that Michael Vick should do six years in prison just for fighting and breeding pit bulls. I don't think that killing a couple of pits is worth six years in the Big House.

Pit bulls are naturally aggressive and they put aggressive dogs to sleep. Michael Vick just made a couple of bucks for what a veterinarian would do to the dogs. Being a fellow football player, I hate seeing a famous minority being overly punished.

OK, he made a dumb choice but six years is not the answer. I believe that they see a successful minority that has something going for himself and want to put that to an end.

**-Jamar**

**From the Beat:** You make some good points here. There was recently an article about how Michael Vick is being seriously punished for the dog fighting and how the NFL is saying that he will never be allowed to play again, but how many NFL players who have been accused of beating up their wives don't get so much flak. What do you think about that?

## Me and My Boyfriend

Eighteen days after my boyfriend got released – and seventeen days after he ran from his EMP – we ran into his mother. I had just finished eating jalepeños when she pulled up. After I spat in her face, we ran through Ryan Elementary. We smoked a stogie and he decided we should go to Ocala Middle School. His mother called the cops and the school was surrounded. Then we got cuffed and taken into the parking lot. They put him into the squad car first and sat me on the hood.

The point of this is I never got a chance to say good-bye to my man. What made it worse is I got charged with resisting arrest and they put resisting orders on us. I ran into him in the halls though. Literally, I ran into his arms and hugged him. We got restrained and I became a security risk (SR) and put in GR. Even then we didn't speak. I don't know why. "Words are very unnecessary, they can only do harm." Tuff titty said the kitty when the milk went dry. Meow

**-Kitti Kat**

**From The Beat:** Kitti, your writing is consistently inspiring and heart-wrenching. You seem to be very focused on love and your relationship, do you think this romance seems especially intense because you are separated? What do you think the two of you need to do to stay out of the system? Sounds like you'll never have a fan in his mother, especially if you spitted in her face. The biggest insult.

## Thoughts

Well, what's up Beat. I just wanted to pay my respect to Dennis who comes to our unit, and let's us open bout any topic. And respect to the whole Beat Within crew.

Well I'm writing bout my girls I care for; Baybe G as an uso that I was locked up with. I'm hella gonna miss her! I pray that when she gets out that she does good. There's hella uso's up in here. Utmost respect to y'all. Talofas to you. Real talk. Keep your heads up and shake them haters. Who gives a damn bout them hatas? Do your time and be strong, unless you think catching a new charge is worth your time. Yeah, go for it. Well, I'm out. One love.

**-Layla**

**From The Beat:** Layla, thanks for the kind words about The Beat. We're here to give you a voice. We even want the haters to have a voice. Maybe they can talk the hate out of themselves. That's one of the good things about writing. It lets you get all kinds of stuff off your chest. We sure can't guarantee that we'll print hating words. But better to get them out so there's room for good words, for kindness and caring. Write on.

## Bored In The Hall

What's up Beat? I been here for five weeks and it's been boring the past week. I have one week to go and I'm glad that I'm getting out.

My plan when I get out is stop smoking the bomb 'cause that's what got me in here. But is going to be hard to do that 'cause I like smoking. I don't got any other choice but to stop cause my PO told me that the next time I come in they're going to send me to the Ranch. But I'm going to try not to come back. I can say that I'm not going to come back cause that what I said last time I was here. The good thing is that I have to go to a drug program. Well that's it for this week Beat – until next week.

**-Sovacos**

**From the Beat:** So, what is your plan on the weed smoking? Perhaps the best way to tackle this problem is to come up with a real plan: What will you do when you get out and are hanging out with friends and they want to smoke? You have time to come up with some strategies right now.

## My Dream

I think that I don't like these topics today so I feel like writing about my dream for when I get out.

The day I leave I am about to wear my Jordan shorts with some long socks and a tank top, also known as a wifebeater. Then I am about to wear my white and red Jordans to match my shorts since they're white, black and red. And there you have it: I am fitted ghetto fabulous status.

When I walk out of here, I am not on probation and I am 18. So, I am sighing myself out and I am about to hit the light rail up and dip to my pad – then really get fitted and hit up the homie Trigger and have him pick me up. I am about to tell him to bring a blunt, so we could blow a chop then after all this happens it should start to be the afternoon and that's when the real partying happens but that's too R-rated for this. But after all that, I still plan to go to school, that's just going to be the first day –

sort of like a congratulations type pf thing, but that's all so gots to cut.

**-Gahramanin**

**From The Beat:** We fully understand how you might want to celebrate after getting out of the Hall, but also think about staying safe and out of trouble. Imagine, if on your first day out of the hall as an adult – you got caught up? What is your plan to have fun and stay out of trouble?

## ome Advice

What's crackin'? This that Young-G from them streets of Gilroy. I ain't feelin' the topic so I'm gonna talk about what's on my mind.

Last week my PO came to talk to me. I'm supposed to be getting out September 12th but I caught two more charges, so I might be going to the Ranch again.

Supposedly, they found my fingerprints on two more "G-Rides" but that's not enough evidence to charge me yet. My PO also denied my job OT's because of that. So to all getting "G-Rides" out there maybe you should think twice and decide to stay low on that shhh.

Those "G-Rides" their trying to charge me with were from last year. Just think before you act and most of the time you'll end up in a better situation. Well that's it for now until next time paper and pencil meet.

To all locked up in this place stay up and keep on striving. Don't even trip – everybody's time will come sooner or later.

**-Young-G**

**From the Beat:** What great advice, especially coming from someone who knows the real consequences of their actions.

## A Memorable Goodbye

Well hey what up. It's your girl green eyes. Well today's topic is a memorable goodbye. Well mine would be to my grandpa because when I was living some where else and I didn't get the chance to say good bye and if he was alive, I would say my goodbyes. I would start off by saying sorry I couldn't be there for him when what happened to him happened. And I would say how much I love him and how he was kind of like my dad because I was raised by my grandparents. It's because I got taken from my moms. They were my everything and I just wish he was alive so I can say my last words to him. But I'm going to make this short. By the time you get this I'll be out and at my new group home doing my time. But my utmost respect to those who know me! Love you.

**-Sarah**

**From The Beat:** Have you had a chance to talk with your grandmother about your grandpa? She would surely like to know how much you loved and appreciated him.

## Dog Fight Idiot

What up Beat? It's me Judy once again.

Well, if I were Michael Vick's homie I would tell him he's such an idiot. The reason for that would be because he's already rich, so why would he be doing stupid things such as dog fights for money knowing he would get busted, cause it's considered as a crime. I think I would most likely smash on him as well because he's like putting animals through torture. To me, that is a wrong thing. I am against animal torture for the fact that I know no body would want to be treated like that. Well that's just my opinion and all I got to say bout this topic, so stay up late.

**-Judy**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for your opinions, Judy. And you are right. Torture is wrong. And dog fighting is wrong.

## The Bible and Truth

I used to be scared of death. This was because I couldn't stand the traditional Christian beliefs that once you die you live forever. When I was young, I preferred nonexistence after death. I never really liked any of the traditional Christian beliefs because it always seemed as if people were being told what they should and shouldn't believe by a single person. There are so many denominations of Christianity out there and each one taught religion a little differently, each church within each denomination also taught religion differently. I got tired of being told what to do and what not to believe. Instead I made my own belief system based on what I could prove to be truth.

I believe in the Bible, yes, but in a different level. There are a few things that should be known about the Bible: First, it is incomplete. There are many books that were written at the time, which could be added, but then the Bible would be too big. Second, the Bible was translated from one language to another and another until eventually it was in English. Over that period of time words developed new meaning with different languages and therefore the Bible became inaccurate or misinterpreted. Lastly, most of the Bible is a bunch of metaphors anyway, so each story can hold a different meaning for everyone that is not necessarily right or wrong and could be interpreted for a good and evil.

I don't choose what I want to believe, I learn what is truth based on facts. Most of these facts look at reincarnation for example: Many people tell of lives they had in the past and names they once had. With enough research it is possible to find that the person once existed. Another example is disembodied spirits on earth. People say that when a person sees these they are hallucinating. I say, "If two people see the same hallucination, it can no longer be called a hallucination." Other things I could go into details about: spirits guides, guardians, magical powers....

The point though of this is not to tell my story of truth. If you can make things move with your mind, I believe it, and you should too. If you see people others can't, talk to them, learn from them. Remember two things though: First, there are good as well as evil powers out there that will either guide or misguide you. Second, be careful who you tell, for what maybe truth is not always accepted adventure. Good luck with your upcoming adventure. Look to the Pentagram as a clue, it is not always evil.

**-The Pentagram's Messenger**

**From the Beat:** These are really interesting facts about the Bible. It's interesting how you don't seem to want to share too much about your belief system – instead choosing to skirt around it and hint about it. Perhaps you can write more about that next time.



## Things I Don't Understand

Some of the things I can't understand is why people don't understand the way we are. By that I mean – many people are quick to judge a book by its cover.

When they see us walking down the street all they do is say we are up to no good. For example, we might rob, but if they only knew we tried so hard to find jobs, but no one hires us. So hey, everyone needs to make money.

Another thing I don't understand is, what would the U.S. do if some random country bombed us. Start a war? What do you think we would do if someone shot at our house where my family lives? We're gonna go back and start a war – no? These are things I don't understand.

**-Ryan**

**From The Beat:** Lots of people don't understand these things. But you will serve your interests best if you make a commitment not to rob or steal. And keep on looking for work. The race, they say, goes to the tortoise. That's because the tortoise doesn't give up. He just keeps walking – slowly maybe, but he doesn't quit. So don't you quit. You will find work and you will prove yourself, by working hard and by being reliable.

## My Chance

I got another chance to change my life around. I'm going to be going to ROP. I'll do my 18 months and get the best out of it so I can be successful. I know it's not going to be easy, but as long as I know I can do it – I can. Before I was sentenced, I wasn't caring about anything. I was on my way to CTA, anyways. But what I realized was – is it worth wasting your life, is it worth not seeing your daughter grow up? Well, it wasn't. So yup Beat, I hate to say it, but this is my last writing from the hall.

**-Kevin**

**From The Beat:** Kevin, you've got your priorities straight. Now get to work. When you work hard at something, time flies. Before you know it, you'll be free and helping to raise your daughter.

## Dog Fight

Yes, I attended a dog fight. It was pretty cool. I had a lot of fun watching the dogs fight. They had two feet. They smoked, and kissed and made up.

**-Sabina**

**From The Beat:** Ho ho. But actually, quite clever.

## A Memorable Goodbye

A memorable goodbye is when I'm done with this, lol.

Also to say goodbye to my mom after Adult Court.

I can't even talk to them – just a heads up and out, 'til the next century.

I can't really express that goodbye.

It's more of a later and out.

Bouncing without a doubt

or a sound when I'm through.

I brought myself in this position,  
only for a second listen.

This is The Beat.

God lift me off my feet.

As I take a seat on my bed

so much stuff goes through my head.

That's why I'm putting it in lead.

These folks wanna put me away.

Damn.

**-Sadman**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like plenty to be sad about, but we are glad to hear that your mind is working, at top speed. And we always enjoy reading your pieces, even with the bad news. We continue you to encourage you to write. Thanks for this piece.

## Angel

There is an angel in my corner  
to protect me from harmful mistakes.  
Without the angel, I would be dead.  
There is also a ghost that haunts me  
for mistakes I have made.

**-Ismaya**

**From The Beat:** Good poem Ismaya. Has your angel met your ghost? What would happen if they met?

## Locked Up

Locked up,  
sitting here with my mouth shut up,  
waiting to get out.

I don't know what's up  
so I toss my coin  
and leave it in the air.

I don't let it land  
because in my position

I don't know where to stand  
or if I'm here for a long time  
'cause I'm down for mine.

I didn't do no crime.

But a witness dropped a dime.

Hope to be next to my girl

but for now I'm spinning in this world.

Will I ever get out

or get a chance to roll with the homies?

It's not worth it.

Where they at?

All I got now is a paper stack  
and some time to do.

It's fat.

All I'm doing is counting cracks  
on the ceiling. Damn,

I'm just another human being.

**-Andres**

**From The Beat:** Ok, how many cracks on the ceiling?

## Last Time

The last time I was in The Beat I wrote about my life saving surgery, and you guys asked what that experience in the hospital taught me about life. Well, it taught me that life is very important and that we could die at any moment. You know what I mean? One day we are here, just chillin', and the next thing you know, we are not here. We just go and never see each other again.

**-Jose**

**From The Beat:** That is an important experience. And because it holds true for all of us, each and every one of us, it makes sense that we treat everyone with kindness. We never know if we'll get a chance to be kind again, but we do know that it feels good to be kind. And it feels good to be treated with kindness.

## What They Told Me In Court

They told me that I would be tried in juvenile court, but the bad news is that it wasn't looking too good. They said that if I lose my case I could go to CYA until I'm 25, or take three strikes. I don't even have one strike now. So that's really bad news. But the other thing is that I could go to ranch camp. And the other thing is that my mom is always here for me. She comes to my court dates and visits twice a week. And I thank her and I love her, a lot.

**-Jose**

**From The Beat:** We're hoping the best for you. We can't wait to see more of those top notch poems you've discovered you know how to write.

## Good Times Joe, Good Times!

I know this one guy named Guitar Joe. Obviously, he plays the guitar. Well, Joe plays really good and makes up his own lyrics and music with his guitar. Some songs are sad, some are humble and some are very funny. But the cool thing about Guitar Joe is that he bursts out with freestyle songs, meaning that he makes it up as he goes. Most are hella funny. It's all good fun and entertaining. He usually plays down at the junction in Boulder Creek. Good times Joe, good times!

**-Megan**

**From The Beat:** Every town should have a Guitar Joe. If we had more Guitar Joes, we'd have fewer problems. Have you heard the expression "music soothes the savage beast"? Three cheers for Guitar Joe.

## Saying Goodbye

Saying goodbye to my family when I went to a nine month program was one of the hardest goodbyes I've had to go through. But seeing my family after those nine months was worth the goodbye.

**-Jackson**

**From The Beat:** But here you are again. We always enjoy your company, but it would be much better to talk in a café, wouldn't it. Get with it Jackson.

## My Guilt

I wish I could take my guilt and sorrow  
and the promises I've broken  
and kiss them goodbye.  
But I can't.

I really wish I could  
but they're in my mind  
and they echo in my head.

**-Ismaya**

**From The Beat:** A fine poem Ismaya. Maybe it's OK that these echo for a while. Eventually, even echoes vanish. They bounce off those interior walls and eventually run out of steam. And the truth is, you never want to completely forget the remorse you feel. In just the right amounts, guilt and remorse can be helpful. The trick is to find the right balance. And that's part of 'growing up'.

## A Memorable Goodbye

It wasn't that long ago that me and my dad had a big blow-out. It was because my dad is an ex-sheriff in Santa Rosa and I had just gotten out of the hall. He was more than just disappointed. He said to me: "Stephanie, I am disowning you as my daughter."

My heart was broken, but I stayed strong and pretended not to care. But really, I felt I had failed my father. I didn't talk to him for seven months.

But one day he called and said: "I just wanted to say I love you."

Two months later my step mom called me at work and said the most heartbreaking news a daddy's girl could have ever got. She told me my father had died in a horrible car accident.

It's been almost three months and I seem to be handling it well. I think it's because the last call from him was truly from his heart. Yeah, I'll admit, I talk to him from my cell at night 'cause I know he cares and I know he hears me. So don't get sad. Get glad. They go to a better place.

**-Stephanie**

**From The Beat:** Well, we're glad that he told you he loved you. Those are pretty great last words. But we can't help being sad about your dad, and for you. We hope you are getting the support you need. Grieving isn't easy. Please ask for help when you feel you need it.

## Check This Out

My grandma had a triple by-pass surgery and is now at home with my grandpa, who has developed Alzheimer's over the years. Me and my older brother were supposed to take care of them, but now we are both locked up for the same stuff. We messed up, because now nobody is there to take care of them. My mom works from early in the morning to late in the afternoon. It sucks because they are suffering for my mistake. To make everything worse, they stress out for the fact that me and my Bro are in here. They aren't supposed to stress because their hearts are weak and they could go at any time. The thing is though, that hopefully we will be getting out of here soon.

**-Johnny**

**From The Beat:** We think we've heard from your brother about this. You are both remorseful, and that is a good thing. The best thing will be when you get to go home and help out. We're hoping that's soon. Thanks for your touching piece.

## My American Dream

My American dream is to become rich and own a nightclub. During the day I would work at a salon. I would have a big house and tons of nice cars. I would also have two adopted kids. But that's a dream that will never happen and not a reality. A dream is utopia, a place where everyone is happy and nothing is wrong. Reality is where everything is wrong.

**-Briana**

**From The Beat:** Nicely written, though we disagree with you about a few things. Reality is a mix of things, we think. Every life has its share of problems and rewards. And just about everything that we create in our lives actually starts with an idea, which is a first cousin to a dream. We've used this example before, but where do you think the Golden Gate Bridge came from? Was it not there one night, but miraculously there the next morning? No, of course not. It started with an idea. And gradually, with a lot of hard work, that idea became a reality. You can work in a salon. You can adopt children. You can even own a nightclub. We hope you never more cars than you need, which is one. But you could have that too. Question is - how hard are you willing to work?

## True Magic

I know some magical people. One friend of mine can pick up any instrument and play it. And not just regular, everyday instruments like the guitar or the piano, but weird, abstract instruments, like the oom or the gymbush, and he plays them very well. I too am a magical person in that I can fly, and breath underwater. That is true magic.

**-Jackson**

**From The Beat:** Yes, we know. You're a flying fish. You are the first flying fish to wind up in juvy. We're recommending you for a spot in the Guinness Book of Records.

## Things I Don't Understand

One thing I don't understand is how cops can just assume you've done something wrong and just take you in. I believe that it's wrong. Another thing I don't understand is why we are here. We live this life to what - lose everything in the end? It doesn't make sense, but in a way it does, because it teaches you to live life to the fullest and just make your life what you want it to be. Because you only have one life. One last thing I don't understand is how man is free, but everywhere he goes, he's in chains.

**-Nicco**

**From The Beat:** You are quite the philosopher, but as we can tell from your first example, quite practical, also. We wish we could say something very wise to you, but we're guessing you'll have thought of it, already. Sometimes the best answers are questions. We'll leave it at that. You keep thinking. And stop doing whatever it was that got you locked up.

## Time Sucks

My time in here sucks. I'm forced to stay sober, can't have my pack of 'Ports. My PO is trying to give me hella time for a little petty crime. I got court on the 10th and I hope I only get a month. I hate visiting—I mean, I like seeing my mom, but I hate not being able to leave with her when visiting is over. But when I get out, I hope I can stay sober or at least not drink as much, 'cause that would really help me and my family, 'cause every time I drink, I end up in here, so I hope when I get out, I stay out, at least for a minute.

-Chub

**From The Beat:** What's really bothering you or hurting you so badly that you drink? Why don't you talk to the psych tec or med tec or a counselor in juvy that you trust now? Or your mom? There's no shame in asking for any help you need. It's smart.

## To Breathe, To Feel Happy

Many people speak  
Some feel weak  
Some need drugs  
Some are content  
With who they love  
The world doesn't need violence anymore  
The world needs peace  
This peace... starts within yourselves  
Persists without  
The pain being rained out  
No words out my mouth  
Just observing in my mind  
Probation is sending me  
To ROP in Nevada  
And I already feel dead  
Today comes too fast  
And tomorrow doesn't last  
Once you wake up  
It doesn't seem as bad  
It actually feels good  
To see that you're alive  
To breathe  
To feel happy

-One Love

**From The Beat:** Lovely poem. When you're on the outs, do you feel more "alive"? Do you only feel dead in juvy, or on the outs, too? Is it hard for you to jump-start your life again, when you're free? Is it that the more times you mess up and get sent to juvy, the more difficult it is to retain your life on the outs and to start it anew? If so, that's called "institutionalization," and it can be a real danger. It means that you can get so used to your friends in juvy, the routine, the guaranteed meals, clean sheets, education, and you (or anyone) can feel so empty and directionless once you're free again, that you end up messing up, because you feel more secure in juvy.

## Tryin' To Change

What's up wit' it, Beat? I was kickin' it wit' my boys, perkin', havin' a coo' time, 'til the cops show'd up. Now I'm up in the halls, between the white walls. I messed up, 'cause my mom is 'bouts to have a boy, and I ain't out there to help her out. It'll be a minute 'til I see my family at the house. But when I get out, I'm a try to change. I'm a try and get a job and help out my mom. My family is missin' me, but I ain't gonna stay here forever. If I can't change, then I'm a keep comin' back in and out of the halls, but my mom won't like that. But if I don't come back, then stay up, within The Beat.

-Mal

**From The Beat:** You're facing the same dilemma lots of young people in the halls are looking at, continuing your life doing whatever, or realizing lots of people you love are depending on you. You can change. Consider what happens if you stay messing up—more drama, more danger, more time inside.

## Black Is...

Black is fun  
Black is cruel  
Black is me  
Black is you  
Black is a color  
Black is my mother  
Black is free  
Wish I could be

-Black

**From The Beat:** Well, what will it take not so much for you to earn your liberty, but to stay free once you're out? Is that your real challenge? Black is mysterious, black is gorgeous, black can stretch forever.

## A Memorable Goodbye

One of the hardest goodbyes that I have to say is when I'm in the halls and my parents come to visit. We talk about what I did to get here and what I was doing when I was out free. We don't have much time to see each other, or enough time to talk about what has been happening while I'm locked up. I ask about my little brother, to see how he's doing, and what he feels as I'm in here. Soon time runs out and we have to say goodbye and wait 'til the next time we see each other again. But what hurts the most is that we're given a time when we can see and talk to each other, instead of being at home, able to talk whenever we want.

-Chino

**From The Beat:** You're very insightful. When you ask your parents about your little brother, how do they answer you? How does your doing whatever brought you into juvy affecting your brother? Will the pain you know your family's going through keep you from messing up again, once you're free?

## See

Today I'm going to write about what's going on for me. Well, if you done some bad stuff, an' later on it will catch up, but if you are wise and see things for what they really are, you will start to get things around you. Feeling bad is not an option, so if you're in trouble, think how to get your shhh together and strive for your goals.

-Juan

**From The Beat:** You're really wise and have a kind heart. Even though you didn't write about what's going on for you, you gave a lot of good advice.

## I Miss My Boobos

I miss my boobos  
I miss talking on the phone  
About things that don't matter  
To no one else  
But it mattered  
So much to us  
I miss laughin' at him  
When he be sayin'  
Some whole other stuff  
I miss him giving me that look  
I miss telling him  
I love him

-Ashley

**From The Beat:** What was so wonderful, so valuable on the outs that you risked your present life all and left it behind while you're in juvy? Being in juvy will either convince you that nothing's worth being away from your little brother and boobos, or you'll realize that that thing means more to you than either of them or your freedom. So what's it going to be?



## I'm Out

What's up, Beat? I'm just happy, because I'm leavin' in days and I hope I don't come back, because I hate it here and people say I'm a come back, because I've been here three times already. I'm only fourteen and people say that I'm used to it, so I'm not gonna be scared to come back. But my goal is to at least stay out for six months, because my birthday is next month, and I'm not trying to spend my fifteenth birthday in juvenile hall.

It's also gonna be hard for me, because I still got a year on probation when I get out, and if I screw up, I'm a be on probation until I'm eighteen. So in four days, I'm a get out and try my best to change my life around and go get my girlfriend back. So once I leave, you'll never see me again, so, peace out.

**-Kasper**

**From The Beat:** What matters is what's going on in your head. Forget staying out for six months. Forget your birthday in juvy. Don't you think you should be asking yourself how you have to change the basics in your life? Whatever you're doing on the outs is sabotaging your life now, your relationship with your girlfriend, and definitely your future.

## I Miss My Little Brother

I miss my little brother. I miss playin' basketball wit' 'im. It's hard, 'cause I'm his big sister an I ain't there to look out for him, but I'm pretty sure he coo', it's jus' that's my lil' brother and I love him. Stay up, lil' brother.

**-Ashley**

**From The Beat:** With you gone, who cares for your little brother? Is he old enough to understand where you are now? Or is he so young that he can't know you're still on this earth, but just in juvy? Can you call him from juvy? Just hearing your voice may help him until you get home.

## My Mother

Never had one  
Never had to run  
Periods an' blood  
No mother to say  
It's good  
Raped  
An' taken  
My mother, tell me  
Was I your mistake?

**-Declined To Sign**

**From The Beat:** This poem you composed is so simple, sad and heartbreaking. You sound like you've never known your mother. Who raised you? Who is your family now? Who do you live with on the outs? Do you have a friend whose mother you feel close to? Someone you can talk to?

## I Wish I Could Go Back In Time

Sometimes I wish I could go back in time just once. I wouldn't get drunk or hit the blunt. Now I'm sittin' here, thinkin' about how I messed up. Now they're trying to take custody away from my grandma and send me to a home. But I won't let that happen in a million years. I don't care, I love my grandma, so I guess I gotta run.

**-Ny**

**From The Beat:** What will running solve? Do you have to convince your PO, PD and/or the judge that your grandma can control you if they send you back to live with her? If your grandma goes to court for you and tells the judge you are welcome in her home, that may help. How can you show the authorities if they give you another chance with your grandma, they can trust you to stay cool?

# NEW MEXICO

## My Uncle Gabe

My uncle he was like a dad to me. My uncle, he was 42 when he died on April 20, 2003. Still today I cry my self to sleep. I try to think of all the good times me and him had together. I could still hear his laugh and his crying.

Today I had a dream about him, he said that he didn't like me in jail 'cause he was in and out of prison and he wants the best for me in my life. He once told me that he would never leave my sight in life. He over dosed... Now I know he wants me to do good. I love him with all of my heart. RIP Gabe

**-Cassandra**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry to hear about your Uncle. Never forget what he said, its advice from experience. Experience that he went through, do your best to change and stay out of the D-home. Remember it's never too late to change.

## Things That Matter

Things that will always matter to me are my family. Just being with my family means every thing to me. Home means everything to me, because my family is there. I just love those homemade meals from my mom. Chicken, mash potatoes, corn, and some Koolaid. The things that especially matter is being with them for the holidays, like Christmas, opening presents, eating that turkey and most of all just being with my family. That's what matters to me.

**-Lil' Man**

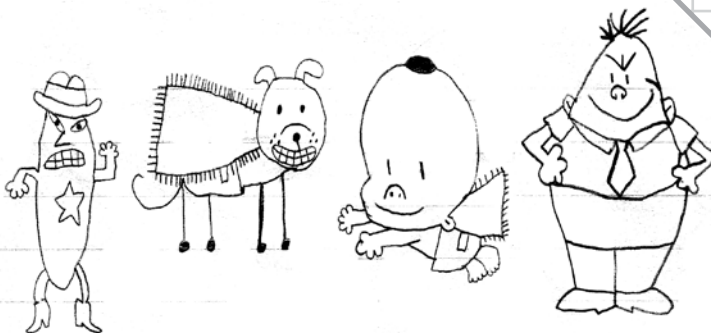
**From The Beat:** Most people in jail feel the same way, they miss their family's the most. One of the main reasons for this is because our families are there for us no matter what. It's not our "homies" once locked up our "homies" are the ones who simply forget about us, at least until were back in the outs. Before you get into trouble think about how much you miss your family and decide if it's worth it? It will always be your choice.

## Some Thing That Means Something To Me

The one thing I miss is my girl, no joke, the way she smiles and brightens my day. Just a simple "what's up", gets me smilin'. I don't understand what it is, but dreamin' from a cell. Watching the sun go down and the moon come up and all I see is her face.

**-Big D**

**From The Beat:** Hold on to that image, because that is one thing that will keep you going. You must also keep in mind when you get out and feel the need to get into trouble, remember the times you were locked up and how much you missed your girl. That is when you need to decide its time to make a change and stay out of detention.



## Let The Past Go

I'm a souljer  
 Seeking closure  
 Through exposure  
 Praying my inner demons  
 Are released  
 Let tha past go  
 So there'll be no more encounters  
 With tha police  
 Tha road I was on  
 Was leading me  
 To becoming deceased  
 But I've  
 Put my pride aside  
 And now I'm begging, "Please  
 I'm an addict  
 I'm addicted  
 Driven by living wicked  
 I'm no longer able to see  
 If there's any hope left in me  
 Part of the cost  
 Of bein' a "boss"  
 Is, you lose yourself and become lost  
 I sit here distraught  
 Almost in a daze  
 And ponder how possible it is  
 For me to change my ways  
 I only got 165 more days  
 Locked behind bars  
 Then what?  
 Will I go back  
 To stealing cars?  
 I've already been to CYA  
 Now I'm Chowchilla bound  
 Ready to touch down  
 But everyone tells me  
 I'm gonna end up  
 Left underground  
 Where my body  
 Won't be found

**-Friskie**

**From The Beat:** Do you have any idea how bad it makes us feel to see you back in here, Friskie? Do you have any idea of your own potential and what you are capable of achieving? Do you have any idea of your own value and worth? We urge you, as strongly as we can, to deal with your addiction very directly. Attend NA meetings (because the support of others who've been where you are can be a critical factor in your success). Take it seriously! You matter!

## Amazing People Here

I can't wait to go home and be with my fam. But I care so much about some of the people I met in here, I wish I could take them home or help them out. There are so amazing people in here, and The Beat is great.

My hardest thing to do is take time to put myself first, but I just want to help any and everyone I can. I ain't lyin', either. A lot of people inspire me—that's why I'm able to write so much and because of experience.

If anyone has a chance to do good, my advice is to do it. I have and I can and I am. Life is what you make it. They say life, it's short, but it can be long, too. I keep it real.

**-Chocolate Mama**

**From The Beat:** We always like reading your upbeat and forward-looking pieces, CM. You've heard us say it before, but we'll say it again. The first person you need to help is yourself because that will make you strong enough to help others. Don't let the troubles that come into all our lives from time to time get you down.

## A Wish

Love is a dangerous and powerful angel  
 As hate is such a powerful fallen angel  
 Don't fall prey to either one  
 Love is meant to be good  
 Not evil  
 Live it!  
 Don't be hurt by love  
 Don't let your idea of love be tainted  
 By hurt and pain  
 Love is a wonderful thing to be celebrated  
 Not mourned  
 Live in the present  
 Don't focus on past hurts  
 Seek out new love  
 For love is one of the few salvations  
 From a life of pain and hurt  
 Love and cherish others  
 While they are around  
 And when they are gone  
 Live as they would want you to live  
 A happy life  
 Do you think the dead  
 Want you to live in pain?  
 No! Of course not  
 In life  
 Please find love  
 And embrace it  
 Give love a chance.

**-Jeska**

**From The Beat:** We hope you don't mind that we typed this in the form of a poem because it sounded so poetic to us. Yes, love can be very healing (and also hurting, at times). We have always remembered this line from a Beatles' song: "The love you take is equal to the love you make." Does your current situation have anything to do with love? If not love for someone, possibly for something? It sounds like you may have a little experience in this area and hopefully you can share more of what you've learned over time (always in an appropriate way, of course)!

## Twenty Days Of Freedom

I'm seventeen years old, but been through more than anyone my age should have. I've been homeless, in and out of drug houses, since I was a little girl. I've lived in foster homes, group homes, but the worst is living with a strung out, drunken father. My daily inspiring words from my dad each morning were, "Why would you even wake up today? You're a nothing, a piece of shhh who no one cares about" — then slave on every command he demanded.

I've been abused since I can remember. One day I finally fought back. Cops and police got involved. My only and last fight I could fight. I knew if I didn't win this fight, I would live with my dad where things got so crazy. I was scared I wouldn't see age eighteen. I lost that fight and now I'm in juvenile hall.

I chose to be here and have eleven days of the twenty I'm supposed to spend in here. I will remember this as the twenty days of freedom, friends and happiness, even though this is a place people regret to be in.

But one thing I've learned being in here is that this is not my last fight. I won't give up and I will keep my head held high. This is my pain reliever. Some things are just too painful to talk about.

**-Dominique**

**From The Beat:** It's too bad that children cannot choose their parents! We have no doubt that what your father did to you is child abuse, even though that label doesn't really help you much. If you have to get locked up to find "freedom, friends and happiness," then something is very wrong, and not just with your own immediate family life, but also with our society that lets this happen and then puts you behind bars for reacting to it. Some things are too painful to talk about, but talking about them might help lessen that pain, and we are always open for you to express anything you want to express. We feel certain you won't be going back into that man's world when you get out of here, so what is in your future?

### How?

How do I live with the pain I feel inside?  
 Will it ever be cured, or will it not?  
 How do I live knowing the people I love most  
 Are the people I'm hurting most?  
 Will they ever forgive me?  
 Will I ever forgive them?  
 How do I get through the days  
 Without feeling loved  
 Like I did once?  
 Is this life really worth living?  
 Is it worth the pain, disappointment, loneliness  
 That I feel?  
 How do I raise a child  
 Without its father?  
 How do I go on  
 Without the man  
 That made me complete?  
 How?  
 These are questions I ask myself every day  
 I pray that these questions  
 Aren't there to stay  
 I can't bear it anymore  
 I shed so many tears  
 They keep pouring  
 In the end  
 The question that's stuck in my head most is:  
 How will I get through this?

**-D-Lo**

*From The Beat: Of course, nobody can really answer these questions but you. One thing we can say is that the father of your child isn't what made you a whole person. You already were that — and remain that — before he ever came into the picture. But if you already have a child, then it seems to us that some of your most basic question will be answered. Who will you love? Your child will love you? And who will you love? You will love your child. Work on the things that have given the system the power to take you away from your child so that you don't have to experience this loss again!*

### An Unforgettable Good-bye

This is a good-bye  
 To all of my dear friends  
 Here in the Hillcrest institution  
 My girls...  
 Nemo--baby, I'm gonna miss your laugh  
 You're like my better half  
 Giggles—Girl, I don't know what I'm gonna do without you  
 You're like someone I never knew  
 I can't forget about "Goldylocks" and "Lazy Eye"  
 Why we got those nicknames?  
 You shouldn't trip why  
 Little — you'll always be in my heart  
 You know nothin' gonna tear our friendship apart  
 And to my little bro, you better be good  
 You know I'd be right by your side if I could  
 So this is the last time  
 I'll be in Hillcrest  
 'Cause when I get out  
 I ain't gettin' caught up for my mess  
 Oh, and let's not forget...  
 Giggles — only 148 days left

**-Chloster**

*From The Beat: What a wonderful send off to your friends here. We know they appreciate it, and we do too. Now, Chloe, don't forget that promise to stay out of places like this! You have much too much to offer to allow yourself to be put behind walls!*

### On That Late Night Creep

Dodging cop cars  
 To avoid gettin' put back  
 Behind bars  
 No set day of release  
 They expect me to end up  
 Incarcerated or deceased  
 On that late night creep  
 So cash flow could increase  
 Then came along the police  
 Now I'm in juvenile hall  
 Wearing other people's drawe's  
 On my way back to tha "Y"  
 Facing time  
 'Cause I went out  
 And committed more crimes  
 It seems like  
 No matter how hard I try  
 Not to cry  
 I still end up shedding tears  
 I've been stuck in the system  
 For the last almost seven years  
 I finally found tha  
 Love of my life  
 One day soon  
 To be his wife  
 Taken away from him  
 In cuffs and chains  
 Stripped of my happiness  
 I'm going insane  
 Why me?  
 Why is this the way  
 Things gotta be?  
 Never to be free  
 Will Friskie  
 Ever be released?  
 It doesn't feel like  
 I'm ever gonna be able  
 To reach the streets  
 My scenery consists of  
 Fences and brick walls  
 This angel is about to fall  
 Almost eighteen  
 Yet I've already lost it all

**-Friskie**

*From The Beat: No, you haven't lost it all yet, Friskie. You still have a powerful mind that probes deeply, even if the answers you've come up with haven't prevented you from falling again. We don't know who you mean by "the love of my life," but what we would like to see is you becoming the love of your life. We sense that you don't love yourself which is like a slap in the face to all who love you. (You're telling them, "You must be stupid for loving me because I don't love myself!") Start there, Friskie, and only good things can come of it.*

*I shed so many tears  
 They keep pouring  
 In the end  
 The question that's stuck in my  
 head most is:  
 How will I get through this?*



### I Can't Wait

I can't wait to go home to start fresh  
I can't wait to be with my mom again  
Where I really need to be, at home  
I can't wait to do me, all by myself  
I can't wait to accomplish some goals  
That need to be achieved  
Gettin' money gone always be there

-Tati

**From The Beat:** If you can't wait, just think of how your mother is feeling. In fact, we hope you keep thinking about how your mother is feeling when you get out there so that when you're tempted to do the things that let the system take you from her, you'll think again and decide it's not worth it.

### About To Be A Mommy

I found out that I'm pregnant three days ago. Everyone asks me if I'ma keep it. Duh! To me, abortion is like murder. I'm gon' through it. Findin' out I'm pregnant in here ain't the way to go. I got da people to support me. It hasn't hit me, but it will. I got my family and friends there, 'nd now I'ma have my baby.

-Mommy

**From The Beat:** You're about to take on the most difficult, but most rewarding, job there is. Your baby deserves a mother at home to teach and guide and love, so the first thing you have to commit yourself to is never giving up your freedom again (because if you keep it real, you'll have to admit you gave it away by your actions). As for abortion being murder, that's an opinion you're entitled to have, but does that mean you think of all your friends who've had abortions as murderers? What punishment should they face, in your opinion?

### A Goodbye Memory

As my eyes fill with tears  
And my mind full of new fears  
I gaze into your eyes  
Prepared to say my last good-bye  
I say, "I love you"  
And begin to cry  
Knowing I have to go  
Is tearing me up inside  
Handcuffed and placed in the car  
Our memories seem to drift afar  
Inside I'm hurting  
Internally dying  
One last glance  
And then I force myself  
To quit crying  
Starting over is never easy  
But I know in my heart  
You'll never leave me  
There's never a right time  
To say goodbye  
So this time  
I'm gonna try

-Friskie

**From The Beat:** Who are you saying good-bye to, Friskie? It seems to us that you just keep saying good-bye to yourself and to your own future. We're not telling you to forget "him," but only that unless you put yourself above him by facing your addiction and dealing with it based on self-respect, you'll just keep finding yourself in these awful situations. You have so much going for you, girl, we hate to see you throw such gifts away.

### A Memorable Goodbye To My Sister

I'm going to miss you so much and good luck  
You're the only white girl who knows how to be real  
And do not really care about what other people say about chu  
I'm gong to miss you so much, Man  
Real talk  
I ain't going to forget about chu, Baby  
That's on some real shhh  
I'm going to be lonely without you by my side  
Going to miss dem good times, girl  
I promise you  
That we about to keep in touch  
No matter what  
I love you, sister  
You is like the other half of me, boo  
Much love and respect, Babe  
I'm going to cry when Nemo Baby  
You leave, but happy  
'Cause you going to do your time

-Chloster

**From The Beat:** You've written some moving good-byes, but we're just as interested in some "Hello" — hello to new behavior, hello to new determination, and hello to new plans for a new life.

### A Memorable Good-Bye

I wish I could've said bye to my big homie. He died like two days ago and I really miss bra a lot. I'm in jail and I can't even go say bye, because I'm in jail.  
An' when I get out, I don't know what I'm gonna do. I just don't want to come back. It's weak in here and I can't just let bra go like that. I can't wait to see the homies, so we could talk. And I'm going to have to say good-bye after he gone. RIP, bra.

Always miss, never forgotten.

-Smoke

**From The Beat:** It's unfortunate that you weren't there to say goodbye — and tragic that the situation arose (yet again) where someone your age has to say good-bye to a friend. You weren't there to say good-bye because you gave the system all the power it needed to take you away from those you love and put you here. And now you're at least flirting with the idea of going back out and giving those same people even more power to control you! You need to connect the dots of your own actions and the system's reactions before you find yourself in one of those "if only" situations that lasts forever.



### It's So Hard

It's so hard to say good-bye  
When you're in a strong relationship wit' someone  
It's so hard to stay together  
When both is feelin' down  
It's so hard to accomplish  
When one is tryna do somethin' else  
It's possible, if you upset  
An' went out to make somethin' happen  
But look at it like this  
Just take a deep breath  
An' think positive  
All will come in great hands

-Tati

**From The Beat:** We wish we understood the message you're trying to convey in this poem, Tati. What are the "great hands" all will come in? Are you saying that when two people who love each other get into a fight, then one of them can go out and do something that will get them into trouble? If that's what you mean, then you should have learned by being in here that you have a lot of self-control (you follow the rules here so you won't get into more trouble). The trick is to learn how to exercise that self-control when it matters the most.

### A Brief Story

One day I was with my friend and we saw two girls kissing in the park and she said, "What the ...? I said, "What? Are you calling me a ....?" She said, "What? Yes, you're a ...? Don't talk to me any more. I don't want to be your friend."

I said, "At least I have the courage to say what I am and be proud, instead of succumbing to peer pressure like you. Coward!" and I walked away.

I hope that you all have the courage to speak up and be who you truly are, not who others want you to be, or what is popular today. Be strong and be proud of who you are!

-Jeska

**From The Beat:** Even though we think we can read between the lines, we wish you would (or could) put more of you into a piece like this. The advice you give to be yourself, and not to give in to peer pressure is profound, and we admire you for being strong enough to be who you are. There is a song in the Broadway musical "La Cage aux Folles" called "I Am What I Am," which goes something like this: "I am what I am/And what I am/Needs no excuses/Life's not worth a damn, 'Til you can say, "Hey world, I am what I am."

### RIP To My Bro

A memorable good-bye for me was when I said good-bye to my bro. He was wanted up in Redwood and all around by the 5-0s in the whole Bay. The reason they was lookin' for him is some stupid bullshhh. His "girl," if you wanna call her that, blamed him for raping her daughter, 'and she don't even got one. He didn't wanna go through with a trial and all that, 'cause he's been tired of that since he's been in an' out of jail. He decided to go to Mexico. We (our family) all met up and said good-bye. I knew that the probabilities of us seeing each other were mostly—none. So we just said good-bye. I started crying, and that was the end of it, except for phone calls.

Two years later, he died. RIP, Julio. I love you. 04.22.'06

-Baby Youngsta

**From The Beat:** This is very sad. How did your brother die? What would he say to you about how you're living your life if he could spend ten more minutes with you?

### Playing Games

Damn, I'm only seventeen, an' I done dis all befo'  
Living life in da fast lane is what I do  
You playing is all you doing. Why?  
I met money, dat's my model  
Legit an' unlegit is what I do in da daily  
Mets Feddy  
Got a house in SF, in da town, an' now in da village  
I been stacking since '94, don't ya know?  
I got 148 days to go  
I start college classes pretty soon  
I know most days I won't definitely be in da mood  
I love to munch an' eat food  
People I keep is 'cause they keepers  
I get into they mind even deeper  
I don't understand  
My name is Giggles  
An' I'm da only one, for reals  
Never will there be one like me  
I ain't a rip or a hoe, etc.  
I'm me  
An' dat's why your beezie want me  
I make money an' dat's point blank  
I love it; I'm a loyal one  
Dat you never knew  
So moving on is what I do  
So you see me

-Giggles

**From The Beat:** There are things in this piece that make us hopeful for your future ("I start college classes pretty soon," and "moving on is what I do"), and there are things in this piece that cause us to worry about your future ("Legit an' unlegit is what I do in da daily," and "I make money and dat's point blank"). It sounds like you think you can keep one foot in the old way of living and put one foot in a new way of living, but we have too much experience in this course to believe it will pay off. Sooner or later, one foot in two worlds is a prescription for tripping. Think carefully about your life and your future, because you only have it once!

### Always On Da Block

I am always on da block  
Tryin' to get that money  
But little did I know  
That this was not funny  
Always on da block  
Lookin' over my shoulder  
Making sure that my enemy  
Or the police are not coming  
Always on da block  
Da block has a lot of things for you  
But it also takes things  
I am out there 24/7  
Not going to school  
I was thinkin' that  
"Who gives a damn?"  
State of mind  
But look at me now  
But this is a point in my life  
That I can't change now  
Because it's the past  
I got in here  
Because I was always  
On da block

-Kabb

**From The Beat:** Now that you've seen and experienced what the block has to offer — and what it has to take from you — what's next? If you come back to a place like this, you can't pretend that you didn't know. If you decide on change, what are some of the things that you will need to change and how? Now seems to be the time to come up with what really matters for you and your future!

### Livin' In Da Game

Livin' in da game has good things to it and bad things. The good things are what come first. Most people dat's living the game either don't make it to fifty, or get turned out. Smoking they own product, which is w'atever you sellin', and would want to get that high by any means possible.

I have seen it in front of me and the whole nine, but it's in me to live dis life. It has brung me in too deep to get out without having to fight for it. That's why I stay true to the game at all times, because the streets will never love ya, but the people in the streets will. I can go to the streets. The streets took a lot of people from me. It's hard to just give it up, but it's always in my thoughts.

-Kabb

**From The Beat:** Why do you say, "It's in you to live that life?" Have you even tried living another way of life? We have VERY GOOD friends who were in the game much longer than you've been alive, but who finally realized that their own unique lives were more important to them than what someone else told them was important. They grew up, and they made some adult choices. It sounds like the number of people on the streets that love you is shrinking because of the streets. Are you really content with knowing that the majority of the "people on the streets don't make it to fifty?" Which will it be for you, dying young or getting turned out? Or more of what your experiencing right now, only in bigger, darker and even more controlled places. We hope you begin to make different choices before it gets to that.

### My Life

The life that I am living right now is the way that I always wanted it to be — livin' it in da fast lane. Then things happened. I got shot in da head. I never even would have thought about me gettin' shot. I never thought about when you get into the streets, what they give you, what the streets gave me — money, clothes, a car. That's just the good things that it has gave me, but more bad things than what I got good.

The main bad thing is how people let money control them. But it's the game and that's a taste of other people's life, and what they go through. But this is my life. I only have fear in God, no other man.

-Kabb

**From The Beat:** What does your fear of God lead you to do, or to stop doing? Even if you don't fear other men, they now control almost your every move, so do you have any fear of what they can do to you? Life is not a game; it's a series of choices, and if you choose to live your life disregarding those the law has given real power to, most of the time they will flex their power on you. What good does that do for you? If you truly fear God, what do you pray for? What do you hear in response?

*... all of a sudden I started crying, but I didn't want no one to see. So I just left and I cried almost the whole day.*

### RIP, Dora

One day I was at school. It was seventh period and I had PE, and me and my homeboy, Dora, were playing soccer and messing around in class. Then the bell rang. We shook hands and went different ways. I went home and did what I would never do. Then I woke up and had a weird feeling, so I got ready and went to school.

I was just hanging around with my homies when Dora's girl came to me with red eyes. She told me he was dead. I couldn't believe it. I didn't want to believe it, so I went to my class. I started thinking, then all of a sudden I started crying, but I didn't want no one to see. So I just left and I cried almost the whole day.

I went to his funeral to show that I was close to him and say goodbye one more time. So, Rest In Peace, Dora.

-Maniak

**From The Beat:** This must have been hard for you to retell. Unfortunately during life, we all lose people that are close and have affected our lives. How did Dora affect your life? We don't know the exact circumstances of his passing, but can you say this tragic incident has changed anything about the way you live your life? How? What did you mean when you wrote that you "went home and did what I would never do?"

## Ayudado!

1- Me ayudado en que aprendido cosas que no sabia.  
 2- Tambien hacer todo como te lo digan.  
 3- Me experiencia no ha sido buena ni mala por que aqui los profesores no enseñan cosas que antes no sabiamos. Tambien aqui dentro puedes ver el mundo y como es crue con personas que hablan tu idioma y otros no. Mucho racismo en las personas que te quidan. Pero de todo aqui sigo.

**From The Beat:** Si el mundo es bien cruel por que toda las personas asi son. Este mundo es hecho por gente, so si dices que esta cruel es por que la gente en el mundo son cruel. Pero so lo la gento como nosotros podemos cambiar eso.

## Helped!

1. I have learned things that I never knew about coming here.  
 2. Also I learned how to follow directions as they give them to me.  
 3. My experience hasn't been good or bad, and the teachers shows us things we've never learned before. Also being locked up has shown me how cruel the world really is to people who speak our language, and some of the other people that take care of us. Regardless of everything I'm still here.

**-Luis, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** The whole world is only cruel if we as people make it cruel. People make the world go round. So it's up to us as people in this world to make a change.

## Yo Pienso.....

Que no pero atrapan a las ballenas me imagino para sacar algun dinero pero yo creo que le importa la gente. Es una buena pregunta.

**From The Beat:** Explicate tu razon por que creés que le quieren sacar dinero as la ballenas. Por que le importa a sierta gente, y sierta gente no?

## I Think...

I think that they trap the whales and exploit them and try to use them in some sort of way to make money. But I do think some people care about them. That's a good question.

**-Samuel, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Explain, why do you think they are trying to make money off of the whales? Why do some people care, and some don't?

## Valleñas Vs. Gente

Talvez las personas interesen mas por unas valleña que por una persona por que no es diario que ban a ver una valleña en el area de San Francisco y las personas se miran diario.

**From The Beat:** Tienes razon. Creés que la gente son malo por pensar asi?

## Whales Versus Humans

People probably care about whales more because they hardly ever see them. In San Francisco you see people every day, but you don't see a whale every day.

**-Dimas, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You're right! Do you think it's wrong for people to think that way?

## Mi Amor

Mi amor ven aqui y dame un beso  
 Esto es amor por que lo siento  
 En mi pecho un beso por beso y  
 Nunca te dejo sola con nadie  
 Por que eres mi angel de cielo  
 Diosito gracias por darme este  
 Regalo la razon por que estoy  
 Enamorado y mija te dije que  
 Nunca te iba olvidar tu eres  
 Mi sol y ahora tengo que trabajar  
 Para tu Corazon que tienes  
 Por dentro vamos a estar juntos  
 Por vida o asta que yo me muera.

**From The Beat:** A quien le escribes este poema? Esta bien romantico. Si lo escribes a tu novia, se lo debiera de regalar.

## My Love

My love, come here and give me a kiss  
 It's love because I can feel it in my chest

A kiss for a kiss  
 I'll never leave you

You are my angel from heaven  
 God, thank you for giving me this gift  
 The reason why I'm so in love

And baby I told you that I would never forget about you  
 You are my sunshine

I have to work to get to the inside of your heart  
 'Cause we are gonna be together forever.

**-Lil' Mousy, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** Who you writing this poem to? It's very romantic! If you are writing it for your girlfriend, then you should give it to her.

*My experience hasn't been good or bad, and the teachers shows us things we've never learned before.*

## Educación En La Cárcel

Para mi la educación en la cárcel esta bien. Una por los que no hablamos ingles los ayudan a aprender el idioma. No es que vamos a aprenderlo en un mes pero algunas palabras se nos quedan y por otra parte la educación es algo de lo mejor que hay en la cárcel. Y aqui en la cárcel son la mejores horas de ir a la escuela.

**From The Beat:** Esta bueno que quieres aprender ingles chavo. Pero no tienes que aprender en la carcel. Si te fascina la escuela tanto asete el favor a no regresar aqui, y aprender todo lo que puedas fuera de la carcel en una escuela mucho mejor.

## Education In Jail

I think the education in juvenile hall is great for me because I don't speak English and the school helps me to learn how to speak English. Sometimes I learn a few words a month, and sometimes I forget them completely. But all in all, the education is pretty good.

**-Dimas, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** That's excellent that you want to learn English! But jail isn't the only place to learn how to speak English. If you like going to school so much, do yourself a favor and don't come back, and learn everything that you can by going to better schools when you get released.



## Errores

Hoy estando en la juvenile despues del programa me puse a leer un hermoso libro en cual al leerlo me acorde de mi novia de todos aquellas momentos que me pasava junto a ella. Pero ahora estando yo aqui no puedo verla mas. Me arepiento de todo lo que yo hice mas no puedo retroeder el tiempo yo cometi un error y creo que nunca lo podre olvidar mas por ese error me alejo para siempre de la persona que me mas queria en mi vida. Por que por aver cometido el error que hice ahora sufrio de una probable deportacion. mas la vida aqui no acaba solo devo de ver las cosas por el lado pocitivo para tener el valor de seguir adelante en esta vida.

**From The Beat:** Todos cometemos errores, y algunos son mas grave que otros. Pero hay que recordarse de algo. Si toda via tienes tu salud, pues tienes la voluntad para seguir adelante. Mira lo que toda via tienes, y agradecelo y busca el valor para mover adelante.

## Errors

Right after the program here in the hall, I began reading a wonderful book. While I was reading it, it reminded me of my girl and all the times that we shared together. And now that I'm in here, I can no longer see her 'cause I made a mistake and now I'm getting deported. I gotta look at the positive side of things so I can move on with my life.

**-Justino, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** We all make mistakes, and some are worse than others. But you have to remember something. The mistake is already in the past and as long as you have your health, then you have the energy to try to make things right and move on with your life. Take a look at what you still have and be grateful, and find that courage to move on and do the right thing.

## Nunca

Yo nunca a aprendido de otras personas. Lo que yo se es por que yo le puesto interes. Lo unico que se que voy a estudiar por que es una meta que se que voy a estudiar por que se me a puesto en mi mente y ojala Dios quiera. No se me quita de mi mente y al terminar mis estudios quiero ser un foobolista de soccer. Yo quiero ser eso estudiar y ser un professional de soccer.

**From The Beat:** Esta bien joven tienes mucho tiempo para seguir tu sueños. Tienes el soporte de nosotros.

## Never

I never really did learn from other people. Whatever I know it's because I was interested in it. The only thing I'm sure about is I'm going to study 'cause it's programmed in my brain and hopefully I don't get sidetracked. And after I'm done with school, I want to play soccer. I want to be a professional soccer player.

**-Daniel, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Good job kid. You have a lot of time to follow your dreams and complete your goals. You have our support!

## Educacion

No es bueno estar en la carcel por que uno quiere estar con la familia. Pero en la vida cometemos errores y por otra parte es bueno por que le enseñan en la escuela. Por que yo no estoy en la escuela cuando estoy aqui me yeban a la escuela. Y por eso no es bueno ni es malo pero en mi mente cuando salga voy a entrar a la school y nunca voy a volver a la carcel. Y voy a ser un estudiante muy educado por la ayuda de la Juvenile.

**From The Beat:** Eso, eso! Asi debieran de hablar, con animo para aprender algo en la escuela! Te felicitamos por querer hacer un buen estudiante fuera de la carcel. Sigue muchacho sigue, no pare, y no vuelvas a mirar para traz!

## Education

It's not good to get locked up because everyone wants to be with their family. But in life we all make mistakes, so being in here has helped out me by going to school, 'cause I haven't been going to school. When I get out I'm going to go to school and not coming back to jail. I'm going to be a well educated student and not come back to Juvenile Hall.

**-Daniel, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** That's how everybody should be talking, with enthusiasm to go to school and learn something! We congratulate you on wanting to get out of the hall and still wanting to go to school. Keep moving forward and don't look back. We wish you the best of luck.

## La Verdad

Pues la verdad no se, pero en este pais U.S.A parese, (mejor dicho) quieren mucho los animals y se preocupan por ellos y estan dispuestos a pagar lo que sea por ellos. Otras personas les importan mas los animals que las personas por que los animals no son como las personas enojan y hacen enemigos pero un animal por mas mal que lo trates el no te deja de querer.

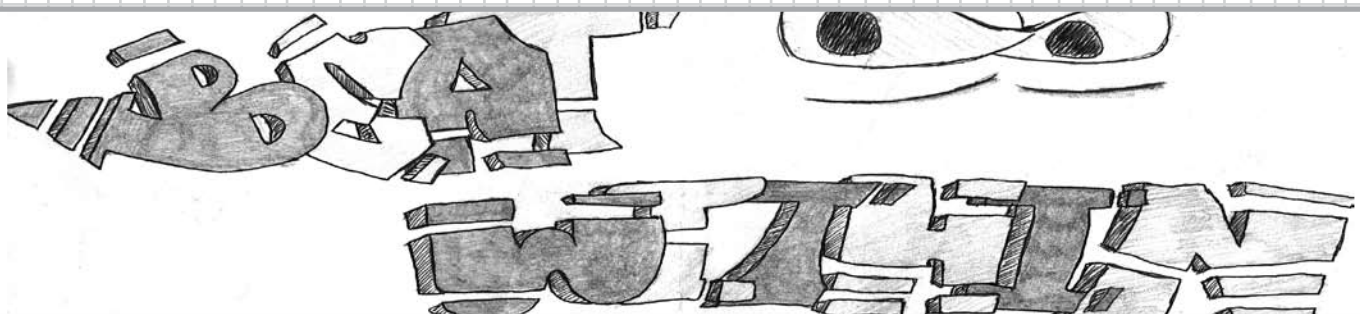
**From The Beat:** Hay animales que tienen tanto enemigos tambien. Animales y personas, de las dos hay diferente clases. Hay animales que matan como la gente tambien. Y tambien hay animales que aman como la gente.

## The Truth

To tell you the truth, I don't really know, but it seems to me in this country (USA), they care more about animals. They are willing to go more out of their way for animals. Some people just like animals better than people because animals are not like humans who piss people off and make enemies. But an animal, no matter how bad you treat them, they never seem to stop caring about you.

**-Luis, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** There are animals that kill just like humans do. And on the flip side there are animals that love just like humans do. So you have a variety of both. But animals and humans are very alike and we act and treat both of the worlds different.



## Las Tres Personas De Mi Vida Que onda Beat!?

Bueno pues, aqui escribiendo otra vez un poco triste y ala misma vez feliz, Estoy triste por que estoy aqui, y estoy feliz por que tengo lo que mas quiero en el mundo, mi mama, mi hermana y mi linda novia. Caundo estoy aqui nomas vivo pensando que voy hacer los fines de semana y vivo pensando en las tres personas de mi vida, por que yo no tengo un papa quien pueda aduyarlas.

Cuando yo estoy aqui es paresos y me siento muy triste, pero bueno, tengo que seguir adelatne y demostrarle a esas tres personas que ellas en realidad me important mucho. Cuando yo salga de aqui voy a echarle muchas gana para nunca caer en la carcel. Solo voy a pensar que le tengo que ayudar a mi mama, por que ella en realidad es padre y madre y mi hermanita.

Y le doy gracias ha Dios por que me saco de los malos caminos y ahora estoy cambiando y tambien se lo agradezco a mi novia por aconselarme. Ojala que todos puedan cambiar para no arrepentirse mas despues cuando ya no puedan hacer.

**From The Beat:** Bueno ahora tienes que madurar y hacer responsable, para no regresar aqui. Si quieres a tu hermana, a tu mama, y tu novia, no vas a regresar aqui. Echale todo lo que tengas guardado para no volver aqui. Tienes 3 personas que te quieren mucho, y te quieren mirar en un buen camino.

## Three People In My Life

Well, I'm here again feeling a little sad and at the same time a little glad. I'm sad because I'm here, but I'm happy 'cause I still have everything I love in this world. I got my mom, my sister, and my pretty girlfriend.

When I'm here all I do is think about what I wanna do on the weekends, and I think about the three most important people in my world, 'cause I don't have a dad and it's hard. But I gotta keep moving forward and show those three people how much I love them. When I get outta here, I'm gonna try my hardest to not ever come back. I need to help my mom 'cause in reality, she is my mom, dad and my sister.

I thank God that He took me off the streets and now I'm changing. And I'm also thankful for my girlfriend who always gives me advice. I hope everyone can change and not regret it later when it's too late.

**-Jonathan, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Now you have to act more mature and be a little more responsible. If you really love your sister, your mom, and your girl like you say you do, then don't come back. Give it everything you've got so you don't have to come back. You have three important people that love and care about you, and they wanna see you on the right path.

*I hope everyone can change  
and not regret it later  
when it's too late.*

## Si Tu Fuera Mi Y Si Yo Fuera Ti

Yo pienso que si yo pudiera ser otra persona tubiera muchas oportunidades en esta vida. Yo se que todavia tengo unas cuantas pero no como antes. Y tambien no estuviera estresado todos los dias, eso es una de las razones que estoy aqui y ahora me arepiento por todo el sufrimiento que ise pasar a mi madre.

**From The Beat:** Nosotros pensamos que si hay gente que cuando nasen ya tienen todo. Algunos no tienen nada. Pero hay que tener fé en las tarjetas que te an dado en este juego. Tienes tu salud, y no es el fin del mundo. Isiste tu mama sufrir, ahora tienes un chance para reparar todo eso. Tienes un chance, y nosotros lo queremos ver desperdiciado. Usalo!

## If You Were Me And I Was You

I think that if I were another person, I would have had a lot more opportunities in this life. I know I still have a few, but not like before. And I wouldn't be stressed out every day. Now I have to face the consequences, and I feel bad for putting my mom through all of this.

**-Blacky, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Not everyone was born in a perfect world. Some people are brought into this world and they already have everything; some people don't have anything. But you have to have faith in the cards you were dealt in this game of life. You have your health, and it's not the end of the world. You said you made your mama suffer, now you have the chance to fix it. So do it, while you have your chance. Don't waste it, use it!

## Gran Golpe

Un gran golpe es cuando perdi a lo que mas quiero que es mi bebe. Damian y a su madre Diana son mis dos especiales pero por mis malos pasos, mis amistades, drogas, perdi a lo unico que me daba fuerza para seguir adelante. Ahora a es muy tarde. Trato de recuperar lo que perdi cuando andava en malos pasos. Pero sigo intentandolo y lo voy a lograr ser feliz natural.

**From The Beat:** Tienes que mirar lo que es mas importante. Tu familia que tienes, o tu amistades y las drogas. Ya sabes lo que te puede pasar caminando el los malos pasos. Trata de recuperar. Todo via tienes tiempo. No tengas prisa.

## A Big Hit

I felt like I got hit bad when I lost my baby Damian and her mother Diana. They are very special to me, but I was hanging with the wrong people doing drugs. I lost everything that gives me the strength to push forward. It's too late to try to get everything back, but I'ma keep trying and I'ma be happy

**-Angel, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You need to see what's more important, young homie. Is your family more important than your friends? You already know what can happen hanging with the wrong people and walking down the wrong path. It's never too late to regain what you lost. You have plenty of time, don't rush yourself or put yourself under unnecessary pressure.

BEAT WITH  
IN

## Falta De Atención

Mi vida se convirtió en un desastre y entre en una depresión. Algo que no lo deceo a nadie. Sentir que no balia nada como un juguete olvidado. Pero no me daba cuenta que daño a los que me amaban y busque atención en los que no le hay por eso le agradezco a mi familia al no aver me olvidado.

**From The Beat:** Agradecelo y enseñale tu gratitud. Tu familia te quiere mucho y solo quieren mirarte en un buen camino. Por que buscas atención en la calle cuando tienes una familia que te quiere? No seas ignorante!

## Not Enough Attention

My life became a disaster and I went into a deep depression, something that I don't wish on anybody. I felt like an old abandoned toy. I didn't notice how bad I was hurting my family, and started looking for attention where I shouldn't have. That's why I'm thankful for my family for never forgetting about me.

**-Angel, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Be grateful and show your gratitude to your family. Your family loves you and they only wanna see you doing good. Don't look for attention in the streets when you already have a family that loves you. Don't be ignorant, and selfish and stop hurting your family.

## Dinero

Hay mucha gente que dice que con el dinero es feliz, pero el dinero no es todo lo que to puede hacer feliz en esta vida lo que hace feliz realmente es la salud de nuestra familia. Tambien puede ser feliz con un regalo sencillo que te pueda dar un ser querido, que tu aprecias con todo tu Corazon. Pero no hay que decir que el dinero no te puede ayudar. Sin el dinero ayuda en unas y otras cosas tambien es necesario, pero lo mas feliz que tu tienes es tu vida.

**From The Beat:** Estas correcto joven! El dinero no es todo pero si es importante para vivir. Las cosas que de verdad los traen felicidad no tiene precio! Por que crees que la gente piensa que el dinero es todo? Hay gente que apercidia su vida solo por un dolar.

## Money

There are a lot of people that say that with money they are happy, but money isn't the only thing that can make you happy in this life. What really makes us happy is our family being in good health, or a loved one, or a lover giving you a present. I'm not saying that money is not important, 'cause obviously we need it to survive, but the most precious thing is your life.

**-David, Marin**

**From The Beat:** You're right! We agree with you when you say money is not everything. You do need money to survive. But the things that we cherish most are priceless. Why do you think people think that money is everything? There are people that throw away their whole life for a couple of dollars.

*I wouldn't change a thing because I'm being helped out in school. Being locked up I learned a lot.*

## Educacion

Educacion esta buena pero hay veces resivo en ingles pero estoy aprendiendo otras palabras. Pero necesito en español que me enseñen tambien pero hay veces voy a solo recibir en ingles. Yo pienso que esta malo pero no se ustedes como piensan. Yo pienso que no esta bien.

**From The Beat:** La educacion es algo bein importante. La escuela de la carcel no es la mejor, pero tienes que aprovechar y aprender todo lo que puedas.

## Education

The education is good. Sometimes I get classes in English so I can learn but I also need classes in Spanish so I can understand what they are trying to teach me. That's the only problem I have is when I don't understand. I don't know what y'all think.

**-William, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Education is something that is very important. The juvenile hall school might not be the best, but you have to take advantage and learn everything that you possibly can. Try to stay out so you don't have to get the mediocre education that you say you are getting in the hall.



## Experiencia

La primer experiencia que a tenido estando en la carcel es que aprendido muchas cosas como que debo estudiar y respetar a los compañeros. Las tareás son complicadas y los maestros son muy buenos. No cambiaria nada por que todo esta muy bien. Me ayudado la escuela. Al estar preso aprendes muchas cosas buenas. Es buena por que no vuelvez hacer cosas malas no uso la palabra beat. De niño aprendi a portarme mal. Era malo, pero ahora aprendido a portarme bien.

**From The Beat:** Muy bien! Aprendistes algo. Tienes que respetar a la gente para que igualmente te respeten a ti. Sigue estudiando, y portate bien para que te puedas mover adelante.

## Experience

The first experience that I had being locked up I learned many things. I learned how to study, and how to respect my peers. The homework was complicated and the teachers were good. I wouldn't change a thing because I'm being helped out in school. Being locked up I learned a lot. It's good because now I'm not gonna do bad things. Since I was little I was a bad kid, but now I'ma be a good person.

**-Samuel, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We are glad to hear that you learned something. You're right you need to respect your peers and others so they can respect you. Keep studying, and be on your best behavior so you can move on forward with your life.



## Spirit Eyes

I cannot see  
the inner city  
from where I am...  
not with my physical eyes  
but Father God...  
my spirit eyes...  
the ones you made  
they can see... they can see.  
They are not hampered  
by the illusion  
that distance preaches,  
neither by my confinement...  
My spirit eyes are not deceived  
by the onslaught  
of information  
and dissemination  
meant for aggravation  
and mental dissipation  
They see... they see...  
Soweto and Rio  
Grazni and Mexico City.  
They see the Gaza  
As clearly as they see  
The grimey little  
rat hole  
where the homeless sleep  
not fifty yards  
from Wall Street...  
King David said:  
'I've never seen the righteous  
forsaken,  
or their seed begging for bread...'  
Lord, who are the righteous?

Now I know, Lord  
you see  
different than me...  
thankfully...  
and I want to look  
through your eyes  
because what I see  
is hurting me  
continually.  
And my tears fall  
over my cheeks  
and my lips  
and onto my tongue  
and they are bitter!

There are ways in which our souls and brilliance shine through our writing. Some people have this effect, while others long for this effect and will never receive it. Well, this next writer definitely has that effect as you'll see in any one of the several poems he's sent us. And whether he's talking about the spirit, his heart reaching, or disjointed discourses, his poetry is one of a kind. With two to three word lines he conveys much more in his writing than most and for that we will always welcome him in our pages. He's writing from Folsom State Prison in Represa, CA. Let us know what you think because we really enjoyed his work and are looking forward to seeing more...

I scream insanely  
for change...  
so much so...  
the blood vessels  
of my soul  
burst bleeding...  
watering the seeds  
of my hope...  
Who's roots  
stretch deeper  
because, into you  
with strength renewed  
the only true  
I can dare  
to believe  
and feel relief  
where and when my soul grieves.

And I am poured out  
as if spirit water,  
but the well,  
as far as I can tell,  
never empties...  
And the WANNABE'S  
who strut and shout  
proclaiming what it's all about  
in their Che Gueverra  
tee shirts,  
need to  
shut up,  
sit down  
and listen...  
to the real revolutionaries...  
war veterans  
scrounging in dumpsters  
for empty soda cans,  
or the single urban mom,  
working two jobs,  
to keep her kids  
fed...  
and off drugs,  
or even the Lifer  
who has come to terms

with who he is  
and what he's done  
in order to  
get where  
he was  
meant to  
be...

Yeah, my spirit eyes see...  
even when  
I'd rather they  
wouldn't... or couldn't...  
They see illusion  
in division  
and confusion...  
pitting life against life...  
vision against vision...  
it's all just  
a fools mission.  
And the predilection  
becomes inflection  
that rots the soul...  
so that even  
the innocent  
have no immunity.  
There is only one race...  
the human race...  
In this place  
and the tone  
of ones face  
does not describe  
the content of the heart...  
Son Father God,  
as I begin today,  
give me the grace  
to understand  
the things  
I cannot change...

and the common sense  
and courage  
to change the things  
I can...

## At The Edge

I'm back at the edge again!  
Edge of this thought,  
at the edge of the unknown,  
at the edge of this paper.

calculated and tapered  
the anger simmers  
running black in ink  
measuring time and space  
against what I think.

Unlike the agenda of yesterday,  
the sharp wit bites,

but not to tear,  
not to kill,  
but only to stir.

Once in heart, I was unsure,  
flailing like a blind man,  
who sees attacks  
that aren't there  
Quixotes windmills.

Today, I step forward assured,  
As did Roman legions  
Who had no concept of defeat.  
I am back at the edge.

## Watch Me Two Step

I am not moved  
by what I see,  
or hear,  
it is all superfluous film flummery.  
And the by word  
on the by way  
is not my way  
not today.  
I seek the route,  
the reason,  
the rhyme,  
the way,  
the truth, the life.  
The intelligent  
dee-sign  
that supercedes  
the myth.  
I am not  
a product of change,  
I was invited to the dance,  
now watch me two step.  
As I elucidate,  
and illuminate,  
close your eyes,  
but you'll still see.  
The conscience  
in the conscious  
collective psyche  
spinning lithly.  
Through the things  
on righteous wings

where free men sing  
despite their chains.

while letting go  
and letting be  
with simplicity  
beyond hypocrisy  
where mediocrity  
is a choice  
and the social voice  
does not hate.  
Darwin was a tool  
who's thesis was cool  
'til his winter came  
and he recanted.

Don't jail the youth  
for their youth  
if they choose prayer  
over packing a gun.  
The flesh fades  
The piper has been paid,  
but he played a song  
that demanded our souls.  
Dancing on coals  
shouldn't be the price  
that we pay twice  
for sins already forgiven.  
Killing the Doctor  
for killing the child  
won't bring bliss  
with seventy two virgins.  
And the mind set

the sure bet  
is just regret  
yet undiscovered.  
and under cover  
like conniving lovers  
the Ass, and the Pachyderm  
spread the same germ  
And it permeates  
and violates  
the hopes of  
the have nots.  
And deceives the haves  
into believing  
that the crack pipe  
was always the destiny  
of its user.  
But God hears the Mother  
who's heart bleeds  
for the child she bore  
whether it dies  
in the drive by...  
or as a casualty of war.  
All hail the media...  
Yahoo, and Expedia  
for shrinking reality  
down to bite size...  
If you want  
seasoning...  
it will  
cost you...  
a... little... bit...  
extra.

## My Heart Reaches

My heart reaches  
in ways  
unique  
to me...  
From the  
abundance of... all that.  
The Holy Grail  
is one  
bottomless  
cup  
that has always  
lain within  
as close as  
my willingness  
to understand...  
I loved once...  
got burned down  
to a pile  
of smoking ashes  
which I took  
and under great pressure  
formed  
into diamonds  
I then used  
to cut through  
the glass house  
I lived in.  
Found myself outside of what I  
thought I knew, with heart reaching...

*when the eyes of fate,  
dance in the first light,  
dreams spin away,  
with receding night.*

## The Day Begun

When the first hint  
of early morning  
shows its face...  
without a warning,  
when the eyes of fate,  
dance in the first light,  
dreams spin away,  
with receding night.

When the first thought  
turns on its wheel,  
casts its lot  
in winter chill.  
When the first breath,  
is deeply taken  
and webs in the head,  
are outward shaken...

Then... and only then,  
has the day begun.

## Nothing

In the midst  
of fractured daylight...  
walking in silence  
like the first upright man.

Cast down rudely  
from a heaven  
he once knew,  
then lost forever.

oh, to return  
to that realm  
beyond the cold blue pale,  
out of all of this.

Where long single notes  
from Satchmo's horn  
permeate every ounce...

of conscious existence.

In the midst  
of shattered reason  
still as death  
and just as much alone.  
Shaken from within  
left to ramble  
holds no bearing.

Oh to rise...  
out of this malaise  
that breaks down  
all that it touches.

In the midst  
of deep seeded illusion  
splintered tears of loss wept  
from eyes that never see.

Tossed in oblivion  
where light has no place  
moving as a shadow  
minus any substance.

Oh, to feel  
one hint of joy  
that precious thing  
which now eludes.

In the midst  
a thread between  
what could have been  
and what is now lost.

Cast out harshly  
never more a part  
seeing the real  
no one else believes.

## Disjointed Discourse

Okay! Get off me! I'm writing! I'm  
writing!  
The thing is...  
Ya' know,  
this ain't easy.  
I wake up in the morning  
and the knuckles  
on my left hand  
ache...  
And my mind is unwilling  
to belch out  
the crap  
into the lap  
of the  
waiting paper.  
Not the way it used to.  
You say, I should go  
with what I know  
just let it flow.  
But that rationale is stinkin'!

'Cause in my way of thinking'  
I don't see things  
like I did  
when I was a kid  
shootin' dope  
and drinkin'  
The resulting clarity  
has brought on  
a sad kind of parity  
who's regularity  
comes in waves  
of stinging nettles  
on my naked flesh.

Ya' know what I mean?  
It's all  
bleached out  
movie scenes  
and the lack  
of distortion  
is unsettling.  
And even in my faith

where the chinks  
in my armour  
are becoming  
far and few between  
There is no rewind  
just an ever present  
case of consciousness  
and hope concaved.  
So I write  
because the time in between  
is stretched  
into a thin excuse.  
Gossamer fibers  
fattened by release  
even though  
what is said...  
avails me nothing.  
And even though  
what is written  
amounts to nothing more than  
verbal flatulence.

## I Am More

(A Poem For M.L.K.)

I am more by far  
than what you see  
when you do see  
this flesh  
you know as me.

My skin is satchel  
I carry around,  
But if you'll dig deeper,  
You might be  
Quite surprised,  
By what is found.

There is a light within,  
That belongs to us all.

It shines through the walls  
That propagate hate. Can you hear  
hope call?

There is in us all,  
A greatness that yearns,  
Like a wheel that turns.  
Truth is the flame,  
And when lit, freely burns.

I am more,  
Than what you perceive,  
I live in the dream,  
Reaching  
Beyond,  
What bigotry believes.

The vision I see...

What is coming to be  
Crosses all boundaries  
Dispels illusion...  
Sets humanity free.

And one day...  
When today has moved away  
When our children  
Have learned and understand  
What we've had to pay...

The world will wake  
All chains will break...  
"Free at last! Free at last!  
Thank God Almighty. We're free at  
last!"

Truly, I am more  
Than what you see.



## Symphony Of Brothers

Out of the jangling discord  
no rhythm,  
or timing,  
only cacophony...

There will one day...  
rise...  
contrary to  
the baser nature  
of men  
who's hearts  
have no inclination,  
there will ring  
a new song...  
one that echoes  
across the whole of the world  
a healing refrain  
that leaves  
in its wake  
understanding...

A symphony  
of brotherhood.

## The Cost Of What I Do?

The cost of what I do  
cannot be measured  
in the effect  
it has on me  
alone.

Every moment  
every thought  
every word  
driven deep  
the effect  
carries.

And the past...no matter how deeply buried...  
resonates ...whether sweetly...  
or in bitter reminder  
of the was  
the unrepentant  
is ever impending...

The sirens wail... so mournful  
a false hope adorned  
within the boxes  
built by hands  
into chiseled hearts...  
caught dreaming.

No matter the depth of the scheming  
reality pounds unrelenting  
drums of responsibility  
the back drop dark  
until light dawns.

The cost of what I do?  
it is measured in the change  
in heart and minds  
where hope alights  
in lives brushed up against...

## Spoon Man

Does any one  
Really get you?  
And does  
it even matter?  
You do your thing  
and  
those who see  
recognize  
it's in their eyes.  
We live in  
a break neck  
full tilt  
materialist  
socio-defective  
society  
where the poet  
has little status  
other than that which  
he carves  
out of the  
stony fabric  
via his own wits  
It has taken time  
and I confess  
I'm getting you  
and even  
getting me...  
which is something  
that held  
the solidity  
of smoke  
not so long ago.

Some of us  
are marked by time  
it etches our features  
as if by a  
stoned to the bone  
craftsman  
who's forgot  
where he left  
his tools  
and so, chooses  
to improvise  
with whatever  
implements  
he can find.  
I know  
you are marked  
in this way...  
as I am  
and the less  
you speak  
the more I see  
that you are  
a gold mine  
who's wealth  
has only been  
scratched  
upon its surface.

*my eye's have opened, and I  
 come to realize that this is  
 my grave, I'm already dead...*

### The Darkest Mind

Darkness is, and was filled in my mind. The hate I feel, the madness I have with a close-minded heart, so cold, so mean. Not one drop of life left in this mind, I call it Darkness...

For my thought are not good... But of the selfishness that clogs the goodness in me. This mind of man, the years may spanned, filled with evil all around. I have no fight left within this mind I have, so I surrendered it, to the evilness that surrounds my every day life

So cold the heart can be, with nothing left in this world I live, I might as well say my goodbye's to the ones who say they loved me at one time — but then turned there backs just as fast. My mind is darkened with no fear of death. My time will come when I could finally rest in my own darkened hole — six feet under is where I shall lay, with the rest who have no name...

But a number which is my prison name — along with the lost and forgotten. That's where I'll rest sleeping in peace in an unmarked grave. But than my eye's have opened, and I come to realize that this is my grave, I'm already dead... With no life left, but the life of a darkened mind. I hope the day I close my eyes will be the day I could finally rest in peace...

Until that day has come. I might as well do it on my own. And make the people happy. And end it all. My mind is gone, my heart is lost. My mind is a battlefield, and Satan has won...

For my darkened mind, is but a lost cause. The mind is darkened. Without a glimpse of light to show I'm alive. Lights out and game over. Because six feet under is where I belong.

We would like to start this introduction by quoting the inspiring letter he sent us. He says, "I am writing to thank you very much for printing my two poems. That's the first time my poetry has been published. I've tried with a lot of other places, but I've always got shot down. So to see my work in your paper gave me hope. I hope that you enjoy these next two. I'm still a little soul lost. I'm still kinda battling my own demons. So again, thank you. I'm praying (The Beat Within) keeps going strong. My prayers are also with you all." It's not often we feel like the work we do is reciprocated with appreciation, so it's always nice to hear people thank us. But in reality, we're the ones who should be thanking you. For while we're also making a living off of the incarcerated like so many others, i.e. lawyers, judges, probation officers, police, court recorders, etc, we at The Beat sometimes forget what we all got into this work for in the first place and that's to help. So please, also thank yourself, for being strong enough to go through such an experience and come out better on the other end by sharing what you learned with the rest of us. He's writing us from Kern Valley State Prison in Delano, CA.

### From Within-"Hell"

From within, these prison walls,  
 inside of concrete cells.  
 That's hot as hell.

Makes me think of how the system is?  
 Over the past nine years I have been through hell  
 and back.

But then again. I'm still in hell.  
 I'm fighting battles I wish I would end.  
 But the hell I'm in is the battle zone we often fight,  
 Over petty things but,  
 the smallest things mean more to us.  
 Some may say. They never cried? And that's a lie.  
 We put our heads up high and walk with pride.  
 But deep inside, we cry for help.

### Surround

Surrounded by Demons all day long.  
 Surrounded by death.  
 There's no place to hide.  
 I close my eyes  
 Just to escape those Demons  
 that surround my every day life  
 But those same Demons  
 are still there when I open my eyes.  
 So I stopped running.  
 And joined them same Demons  
 that surround my every day life

### TASMAN

### They Showed Me The Way

San Mateo County Juvenile Hall is the place to be. Sometimes it's just vacation for people whose been in and out a couple of times. On some real stuff though this juvenile hall is like a daycare to me, they don't even mistreat kids here as there supposed too. And when you do little things as if swear or do anything bad they will only give you a certain amount of hours in here. But the catchy part I don't get is that this place and the people that work here still change people's lives. People would moan and groan for getting one or two hours and that I really don't call time.

The staff members that work here have what you can call a "lay back job." The reason for this being is because it seems like they sit there all day and watch criminals, they tell them what to do, where to go from time to time, and where you're at in terms of appropriateness.

I really want to express my respect, my time, and thanks to them. The staff members will everyday no matter what push, and force you. I really shouldn't recall myself being

It was a shock to us to read this piece because this youngster, who we assume is out now (The return address is one we don't recognize in San Bruno), takes on a different perspective than we're used to hearing. He says that the staff at Hillcrest (San Mateo Juvenile Hall) gave him tools he could use on the outside that will help him to never return again. We usually hear the opposite. It's sort of a relief to hear that it's working for some with the plethora of those who say it doesn't. Well, hopefully, he can keep the experience of people telling him what to do in his mind whenever temptation is calling.

locked up because all that's going on is that you're away from your family for a couple of days, months, or years and your back home with your family in no time. Being in here for me was a good experience. They've taught me a lot about the reasons I'm here for. I would learn something new everyday.

What I've learned in juvenile is four things, if you can't handle the time don't commit the crime — everything, and anything counts and is possible. YOU JUST HAVE TO BELIEVE IN ORDER TO HAVE A FUTURE YOU HAVE TO HAVE A PLAN, AND GOALS.

## Bountiful

What it is people it's me Mainy again. Lil' Mainy the Prince I mean aka Kali. But yeah I wrote The Beat last — no two weeks ago I thought they was gon' send me a Beat I guess not though. I was hopin' to hear from Sheerly but I guess not. But anyways I hope my writin' at least made it in The Beat Within 'cause it was a whole lot of writin'. But yeah, I just wanted to write The Beat again 'cause um Lil' Mainy only got a month left. I'm fenna be out there doin' the right thing. I shouldn't even be sayin' what I am gon' do and just show it, but I know I am...

I already know it's some haters out there who want see a young man like me fall and never be seen or heard from again. But hey that's just the way people is these days. I believe we need to create some new images because the one we paint we only show nothin' but at least somethin' that is jeopardizin' more than ourselves. But the future all we do is not think and our thinkin' is very important and if we do think it's nothin' that get far, you either remain the same or go back to the same place — that's the turf then jail, turf, then jail. You look forward to the same thing.

This is a big ass world and you are part of it everything one person has done some one may have done the same or did it before. You are the imagination and I know we could do way, way better than this. I just hate to see the same. I've been in and out of jail since 10 and yeah it did seem like I would never change, but change only starts from within you. I thought of how to change but never did it. Really I didn't know how to change but it's happened and I'm fenna make

my imagination real Bountiful.

*if you could show me my lost long  
error. I would like to say  
thank you my life long mirror*

## Lost One

I have given her me at whatever cost.  
I have search for some one like you for so long  
But now I'm lost...

I could never be the only one  
I thought that heart of hers was true  
But she has fallen for  
some.

Damn what she has begun  
is something  
that nothin'  
to her in fact  
she has run with my heart and dropped it in the July  
burnin' summer sun.  
I got love, I have trust above  
that she'll be  
yet forever my only  
there's a first for everything  
and she has changed something inside me  
no one could ever  
resume  
But it will never matter 'cause she's my  
Lost One

We once had this great thinker in our workshops in Alameda County Juvenile Hall, but now he's moved on to Dewitt Nelson (a California Youth Authority institution in Stockton, CA). He gives a shout out to Sheerly, one of our favorite workshop facilitators and dedicated to this publication and its writers. We'll make sure she gets the message. This week he gives us a few poems that we really enjoyed reading. A couple of love poems that are really sad because we believe incarceration is a time where one should be focusing on self and not others, even though it can get lonely in such a place. He closes with two poems we really liked. One about what he sees in the mirror and the other about going through the same o' same. We'll drop this in the mail for him as soon as it gets published.

## Forever Yours Within

If I could you my heart  
my whole life would change  
you is like light that brighten the dark side of life  
"Damn" this feeling is strange...  
its like the knife that cut my flesh  
and you stitched me back  
I know with you I'll give you my best  
and that's a fact...  
And if I cry  
Again I'll just wipe my tears away  
I thought for you I died  
But I lived for you to remain a stay  
A change of nothin' else  
But there's only one way out and that's the only  
way end  
I need you to myself  
To only begin  
Forever  
Always yours within

## My Mirror

"Damn"  
My mirror...  
How long will you reflect this life, this face  
this price of place  
Don't you see the fear? It's you, my mirror  
Can't you see my past? Past these mask  
I've wore through, that's  
why I'm abash  
of such  
of search  
I've never look for  
But never knew  
That's why I ask you  
What's past my image  
I've looked and looked  
and still I'm not finish  
I've looked for more than what others look  
at you for  
if you could show me my lost long  
error. I would like to say  
thank you my life long mirror

## Same O' Same

Travelin' far from where I remain  
seeing myself as a symbol never less only a name  
O' it's shame  
There's no hope no more and I witness the same  
O' same  
yet I take the blame for failin' to remain  
to fight fire wit' its own flame  
From rock bottom  
we remain one column  
as we came  
Look at this picture we frame  
it's image wit' no such name  
all this eternal bleed never change  
it's like we see no value, no help,  
no restrain  
from the Same O' Same.



### Tip On Improving Your Memory Loved Ones

This is the first of a two part series on memory improvement. "The true art of memory is the art of attention." — Sir Juan

We are in an information age of ever-changing technology. Whether you're a student trying to absorb and remember information for test and to master subject matter, or an executive inundated by statistics, new facts and figures, most of us would like to improve our memory. Perhaps you've admired people who remember people's names easily and asked yourself, "How do they do that?" Here are a few tips that can help improve your memory:

#### Choose to remember:

First you have to have a strong desire to improve your memory remind yourself of the benefits of a good memory such as increased confidence say aloud, "I'm putting my keys on the counter" affirm, "I have a good memory" remember a positive attitude helps make learning anything more meaningful and effective.

#### Become engaged:

When you take an interest in and truly care about people you'll want to remember their name and be curious about knowing more about them as unique individuals a deep interest in your work and studies and a curiosity about life improve your desire to remember

#### Learn to concentrate:

You will increase your ability to focus when you have short periods of intense concentration turn off the tv and instead of multi tasking focus on the subject at hand for example

Lately this next writer has been sending us how to's. And this week the how to is on something we're sure everyone needs and that's memory. Sometimes there are things we don't want to remember, but all in all, memory is closely related to intelligence. For one can learn as much as they want but if they can remember, retain, and regurgitate what they've learned then what they've learned becomes useless. Now let us see if we can remember where Juan is writing from... Oh, okay... He's writing from San Quentin State Prison in San Quentin, CA.

instead of reading a textbook or training manual as if it where a novel set preview it for general understanding stretch then set the timer again for five minutes and dig out important information

#### Visualize:

Be a keen observer and notice details. Really look at and be aware of people when you talk with them. Pictures what you want to remember sharpen your visual senses by noting slight differences this is especially helpful if you're a visual learner

#### Listen:

Sharpen your hearing by being an active listener. Become aware of the differences in voices sirens and birds and distinguish between sounds create auditory tapes especially if you're an auditory learner.

#### Write it down:

You use your kinesthetic sense when you take notes or draw pictures diagrams or models carry a pen and paper with you to jot down information as soon as possible use note cards and post it notes to help memorize concepts. The shortest pencil is worth more than the longest memory.

## M. ALVAREZ

### Battle Zone

I feel like I'm in a battle field with no way to turn.  
I begin to steady my mind up so I can see and think clearly,

But these mind games keep taking over,  
So I grip onto my blade and stand on my own  
grown, waiting for the next move my opponent decides to  
take...

But am I really on a battle field or is it just my wicked  
mind?

I'm forced to glance into my soul and see what lays inside,  
I'm shocked to what I see because what's on sight ain't for  
me.

So I'm left with one choice and that's fight 'till I decease!!

Yet I'm fighting and I fight the war that lays on sight,  
I stop and look around and see the many lifes that'll go  
tonight.

I'm surprised to what I hear, the wind carries my name,  
I buckle and almost fall, I look towards my pain,  
Blood spreads all over and I begin to drift away,  
I balance in one knee... tonight maybe my day.

"Is this real or is this a game?"

I must know, please let me know.

My mind is racing my eyes are shut and still the wind  
carries my name, so I stop and look ahead "can this really  
be my faith?"

It gots to be its only right... "I'm proud of the life I got."  
Yet I'm leaving I'm dying its time for me to go,

We couldn't publish one of this guy's pieces because he was giving it up to all his fallen soldiers, which would've been okay if he was talking about everyone, but it's clear that he's only talking about his gang, so we decided against it. This next piece is one about being in a battle zone. And after reading it, we feel like the battle zone is more within himself than with anything else. He sees God in this piece while getting into a knife to knife combat with someone else. He's writing from Glen Mills in Concordville, Pennsylvania.

So with the littlest strength I got left I try to look up at the  
sky... "Lord take me please take me to this place that I  
deserve!"

I get hit from behind

And I stumble on my back as I try to close my eyes,

But somehow I'm forced to see what lays on sight

A man stands above me, and another man above this man,  
I'm waiting and I'm waiting yet the mans blade above me  
has yet not dropped

And it's because the man above his is well known as our  
God!!

So I finally close my eyes and once again the wind carries  
me name...

"Michael it's me please wake up" "Michael" "Michael"  
"Wake up Michael"...

A tear rolls and falls from my eyes and I wake up in a  
puddle of sweat as my sister calls out my name...

"Michael" she says "What" I reply "are you o.k"

"No. I just had a bad dream."

"Well take a look at this, and please tell me I'm not the  
one who's dreaming"

I look up at the sky and see this beautiful dove hovering  
above me.

## Change

My life has been an emotional roller coaster. Yeah I've had my highs and lows but to me the impact of the lows far exceeds the lesson of my highs. My belief is "one can only learn from failures and not achievements." You might say I'm crazy but in actuality what can you honestly tell me you learned from excel-ment? I mean sure to excel is our goal when involved with whatever activity but the trials and errors of failure we'll value more. Not to deter from positivity but if you fight constantly and win it becomes boring but as soon as you lose a fight your mind starts dissecting the matter and pin pointing your mistakes and the first thing you say is "next time I'll do this instead of that or I'll do that and watch out for this." You see, lesson learned. Moving on.

I'm 23 now and my days left for release are getting shorter. Don't get me wrong I got a few more years left but in that little time I've been reflecting on past lessons and collecting new lessons trying to see if I really heeded such. Why? Well, because a lot of people walk free of these revolving doors and head right back to the same lifestyle that placed them there in the first place. That is my fear: That although I say I've learned my lesson, did I really learn and value the message?

Like my brother he just got out a few months back but it took him a mere (45) days to violate parole and be sitting back in the county jail looking at (32) years for a new offense. My uncle did (12) years straight yet he's back after catching a new beef (2) weeks before he was to get off parole. Numerous of my cousins have come in and out, and me I've been stranded for (7) years creeping up on (8). So the fear I have is breaking the cycle and leading a straight life.

I've been an active gang member since 1993 and being incarcerated you have designated groups that you have to roll with whether its because of color (red, blue, etc...) or belief. So now constantly being surrounded by the same individuals that you unconsciously blame for your incarceration how can you really say "hey I've changed" when that plays a major factor?

Then what irks me the most is religious hypocrites, with all that "god if you let me go on this I'll never mess up again" soon as they say so and so you've been released the first words out of your mouth is man I'm going to buy me a fat sack and a bottle of Henny. What happen to Jesus was your savior? I call that the "double dutch", why? because all you're doing is jumping in and jumping out when its not going good for you.

"The game" as we profess to be a part of has its good and when you're deep in the game there is no come and go

We really appreciate honest and caring people who devote their lives to gaining a better understanding about where they are versus where they want to be. This next writer, who's written for The Beat for quite some time now, just under a different name, hits us with a piece about change that's as honest as they come. He calls a whole lot of people out and we really appreciate it because frankly we get sort of tired of it too. We hear a lot about, "Ooh baby, I'm gonna change for you," or "I've found God and now I'm on the path to righteousness." And we don't want to take away from people who are genuinely on this hype, but what Kaution is putting on front street are the people who say these things while suffering the monotony of incarceration and then when they come to the razzle-dazzle of the streets it's right back to what they were doing to get them back to where they were complaining about. Most of us aren't exempt from this and that's another red flag of how the system is broken. It teaches you to survive and make a living in jail, when for most, it's supposed to be teaching us to survive and make a living on the outside because most of us will eventually be back in the community anyway. We can respect a man who sees the lessons in failure and use those lessons to remain honest with himself. For though he's human like the rest of us and will make mistakes like the rest of us (he well aware of this and doesn't deny it), he still wants to do better. Hopefully, his falls won't be as drastic as before because there are times when a simple trip has just as much impact as a deliberate fall flat on the face. He's writing from Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, CA, and again we really appreciate and respect this man's mind so hopefully you will too.

privileges its either you're all in or get out the way. Lets further this written dialogue. Why is the game so addicting? Everyday people we hang with fall victim to the game and the effects of such begins to surface yet we ignore every lesson. The victims of the harshness the game has on people we see daily from people dying, going to jail or doing things they normally wouldn't consider. Still and all we indulge how many times shall we get burned before we realize "hey the game ain't for me"? And I'm not just talking the drug game I'm referring to the game and its many avenues: jacking, pimping, playerism, etc

I'm going to keep it real with you all and myself I don't know what I'm going to do when I get out because who's to say temptation won't get the best of me and I become a part the statistics of repeated offenders. There are a lot of people I see writing in The Beat Within that have gotten out but a few weeks later they're writing how they got caught back up. I feel where they're coming from because I'm a product of my environment and the streets is all is all I really know so my motivation to be better is my kids and being there as a father for them.

About the time I get out it would've been (11) years (10) months and (21) days of their lives that I missed not including my golden years as an adult and teen. So I say confidently that I've learned my lesson, but if I'll excel from such I can't state factly but I will say I'm determined not to become a member of societies statistical census of repeated offenders. Young people we've got to take control of our destinies and learn from our mistakes. Prevailment lies within error and excelment bonds with the effort to achieve.

## Double Fisted Momma

Momma, whats in yo' hands?

My lighter and something else that you cant see.

I'm a double fisted momma if you please.

It is concealed! Or had it concealed me?

I feel free! But I'm not obviously.

I'm a double fisted momma can't you see.

My hands ain't free, no more! I can do nothing!

But hold it to my mouth one for my mouth and one 2 light.

I'm a double fisted momma if you please.

Now I sit gaffled up not at all free

I used to be a double fisted momma

But now I'm locked up, oh so free.

## LOVE4

Writing to us from the Robert Presley Detention Center in Riverside, CA, and introduced to us by another first time writer, we bring you a "double fisted momma." Well, hopefully she's not one any longer. For what she detailed for us in her short poem is horrendous. It must be difficult to raise a child when you're addicted to drugs. We think she's getting the help she needs, so we're happy to hear that.

## Dead Weight

Get up and get out, girl its time to pack your bags  
 Gotta get your own cash, ain't no slackin' on 'bag  
 When I was a youngsta  
 I had to clap them mans  
 Refused to go hungry, so what you think about that?  
 I had a ruff life  
 No hype  
 Now a need a tuff wife, game tight  
 And shorty you ain't actin' right  
 So it's time to raise up, somethin' sorta like a Chevy  
 I don't carry me no dead weight  
 And girl you gettin' heavy

You's draggin' me down, dead weight by the ounce  
 pound or key  
 Why you leach off me?  
 A bad name to dames 'cause beauty is skin deep  
 I know love ain't free  
 But please  
 Since when did you lovin' me become yo' full time  
 J-O-B?

You gotta do more then simply warm my sheets  
 Freak  
 I'd trade in yo' cheeks fo' a chick wit' mouth piece  
 Who got intelligent words to speak and want mo' from  
 me  
 Than green backs  
 On contact  
 I smash cats who want that  
 What? You gotta ghetto pass? I highly doubt that  
 50-50 thang you gotta be willing and able  
 I might be bringing home the bacon  
 But you gotta set it on the table

## Murder By Numbers

It's murder by numbers when brothers is alienated  
 Outcasts cast down, cast out and degraded  
 Finding comfort in numbers  
 Blunders is unforgiven  
 Where rivals get thundered on  
 Get gone and good riddance  
 I identified wit-flying colors  
 Colors is correlated wit' allies and bad guys  
 My fate lies wit' those hated  
 Never seen a peer in the jury box wit' dread locks  
 Or bald headed homeboys  
 Who spat rocks on crack blocks  
 A fat loss to have a young thug strung up  
 But what did you expect  
 When raised amongst chin checks, sex, teks,  
 And glass drugs?

My culture is full of vultures who feed off youngsta's  
 mind  
 Innocent and dedicated, programmable over time  
 I find the lesson pure  
 It's just the teachers who're corrupt  
 Self-serving dictators who ain't giving a  
 So sag yo' pants, thizz dance  
 Gang bang and get smothered  
 'Cause that's where you headed when you murder by  
 numbers

This next writer is well respected around here and not only because of his amazing talent as a poet. But also because his heart surpasses many. Usually he uses the 'tough' love approach by calling us on our flaws, but we can tell that it's all out of love. He expresses himself using the universal language of rhyme and when it comes to making rhymes flow, Ray is definitely at the top of the list. This week he sends us four of his own poems and then gives us a special treat. He makes it clear that "To Walk With Daddy," and "Is Prison In The Phone Book" are poems from somewhere other than himself. But since we are behind our trusty little computers we were able to search for the poets online. We couldn't find the creator of both of these poems but we did find "Is Prison In The Phone Book." However, it must have been changed by someone because the original title reads, "Is Heaven In The Phone Book." We wanted to point this out because Ray shared something with us by someone else the right way. You wouldn't believe it, but a lot of times people plagiarize other people's work and it drives us crazy because all we're trying to do is give the voiceless a voice. When people speak out with someone else's voice without giving that person credit for it, it disgusts us. For not only are you attempting to cheat us and all of our readers, but you're ultimately cheating yourself by taking credit for something you didn't do. We assume that goes on a whole lot in jail. However, Ray is such an amazing poet that he didn't have to do that. He sent these two poems to us because he thought it would be good for incarcerated parents to hear. And we agree with him because more times than not, we don't realize that we aren't the only ones suffering from our consequences. He's writing from Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga, CA. Thank you for being you, Ray...

## Popular

I partied like a rock star when I rocked that rock hard  
 Duck and dodge them cop cars  
 But I never got far  
 Spit bars that stop hearts, like faulty pace makers  
 Bay area certified like the '9ers and the Raiders  
 Why when I grab the rifle  
 I'm an urban American idol?  
 I do what I do fo' survival, compete wit' greedy rivals  
 But you, you see the fame, you see the 'caine amphetamine  
 You hear my name and hear this game  
 Get inflamed and rearrange to mommy's pain and daddy's  
 shame  
 To ghettoize fo' the hell of it  
 Since when the hell did being broke become the nations  
 fashion trend?  
 In the hearts of men there lies a friend  
 And pride has been his name  
 Popularity bought with bragging leads to bullets in your  
 brain  
 So look at me as I sag my pants  
 And floss my tats  
 And tip my 40 bottles  
 And wonder how you let me be your little kiddie's roll  
 model

## To Walk With Daddy

Walk a little slower daddy  
 Said a child oh so small  
 I am following in your footsteps  
 and I do not want to fall  
 sometimes your steps are very fast  
 sometimes they are hard to see  
 so walk a little slower daddy  
 for you are leading me  
 someday when I am all grown up  
 you are what I want to be  
 then when I have a little child  
 who will follow after me  
 I would want to lead them just like you  
 And know that I was true  
 So walk a little slower daddy  
 For I must follow you

-Poet Unknown



## Is Prison In The Phone Book

I listened as a little boy spoke into the phone  
 He asked, "Is prison in the phone  
 'Cause I need my mommy home?"  
 Then he said, "My mommy went to prison  
 But I need her here today  
 My tummy hurts and I fell down  
 Can she come home right away?  
 Is prison in the yellow part I don't know where to look  
 Operator these are such big words  
 Are you sure she's in this book?  
 I think my daddy needs her  
 At night I hear him call my mommy's name  
 Lady can you tell me why?  
 My mommy's been gone such a long, long time  
 And my grandma went to heaven  
 I really, really need my mommy  
 You see I am about to turn seven  
 I am sorry operator I didn't mean to make you cry  
 Does your tummy hurt the way mine does  
 Or is there something in your eye?  
 Oops my daddy just came in so now I gotta go  
 So lady can you find my mommy please?  
 I really miss her so"

-Poet Unknown

## Gearhead

I've been on them muscle cars wit' a fo' on the floor  
 Before E-40 was yellin' out "tell me when to go"  
 Mopar prevalent, GTA a GTO  
 I'd love to flip a goat, with uncountable spokes  
 Tubbin' out my tires, racin' slicks in my wheel well  
 Squat on Irocs  
 No spinners  
 No sprewells  
 Competition cams slammin' down on my air bags  
 Summit catalogs tire smoke in my airspace  
 A grease monkey gearhead racin' down the belly  
 Grind hella hard and blow my dough at Gottelli's  
 Speed shop  
 We cop  
 Barry Gordy speed demons  
 Ten blocks away you can hear my tires screamin'  
 409 crate engine  
 serpentine belt kit  
 that's a bangin' big block fo' you automotive idiots  
 sittin' in my Gran' Nash matchin' number T-type  
 dreaming of a GNX  
 pissing off my jealous wife  
 gasoline in my veins when the rear tires grip  
 knockin' out 11's smashin' down the local drag strip

## Not Living Just Existing

A wasted existence  
 Paying everyday for my constant resistance.  
 To myself, to my family  
 To the ones who have always cared  
 Their feelings I never spared  
 I lost everything I held dear  
 Now I'm just this empty shell.  
 Not really living just existing in this world  
 That drains me.  
 Pains me.  
 Tries to change me  
 I could have been so much more  
 Than what I am now  
 I could have made my family so proud  
 Instead I rot in hell  
 For my crimes.  
 All those times I could have walked away  
 But I always chose to stay  
 And fall in that abyss  
 And burn in my own despair  
 Because I thought my life was beyond repair  
 When will this agony end.  
 How long will I have to pretend to be of sound mind.  
 When I'm really dying inside  
 I'm always hiding this pain with my pride  
 My insanity I try to subside  
 But I'm shattered to pieces, broken so deep  
 I lost all the hope I tried to keep.  
 Where do I go from here?  
 Now that I'm lost in so much fear?

*My insanity I try to subside  
 But I'm shattered to pieces,  
 broken so deep*

## •KRISTINA JAVIER•

This next new writer, who's writing us, with the urging of her drug counselor, from the Robert Presley Detention Center in Riverside, CA, is going through many things at this moment. We don't know her too well, but the two poems she sends tells us a lot about this elder who is full of important thoughtful knowledge. The poems you are about to read are very dark and reflect the dark state of mind she's in right now. The first, and probably most dark of the two, is about how she cuts herself because she feels like she's an empty vessel and cutting herself reminds her that she's still living. Though we could offer our own advice, we won't because we're assuming she's getting enough of that already. However, we can continually assist her in getting these haunting ideas off her chest by offering a platform for her to do so on. We hope she's dealing with what's plaguing her and also hope she can continue to keep her pencil on the paper because, above all else, she's a very talented poet.

## Cutter

I cut to bleed  
 I bleed to feel  
 I want to feel to know I'm human  
 To know that I'm not just an empty shell  
 To know I'm alive and not just existing  
 In this place  
 Staring death in the face  
 Every waking moment  
 Every time I close my eyes  
 Every dream I have  
 I see the red  
 Draining  
 Staining  
 Like tears running down my skin  
 I try to cut away my sin  
 Razor sharp metals  
 Pieces of broken glass  
 I feel it pass through my flesh  
 Blood dripping so fresh  
 These are the demons  
 Trapped deep inside me  
 Scared to release them  
 So I try to silence them  
 What is silence anymore to me?  
 Something wanted?  
 Something feared?  
 Where do I go from here?

## Slow Pain

Beat family, what it do? It's me your dude Nasir back with a sincere piece and it's very personal but I gotta speak on it to shed light on a dark situation that plagues this justice system. And it's dealing with mental illness. At first I wasn't gonna write about it but my conscience wouldn't let me speak 'til I did so without no further delay here's the story.

As y'all know for the last few months I was in the hole on false charges but recently I was released 'cause I was found not guilty of the charges. However, before I was released from the hole the C/O's (Correctional Officers) was sweating individuals who was single cell, you know without a cellie to take a cellie. I wasn't trippin' about them sweating me for a cellie because I had already been back there for a few months with no cellie. I must confess after being in prison for going on two decades I like being in the cell by myself. You can get a lot done without no distractions especially in the hole. Anyways, this particular day there was chaos in the unit between two guys who were cellies and the C/O's needed a spot for one of them.

Well I had already talked to 2 guys to see if we could hook up but that was out we were not compatible for different reasons. So one of the guys I had talked to had a cellie in which they were not getting along and he was a older guy, so I went to go talk to him of course handcuffed (I was in the hole) and with a C/O escort. He was being held in the shower, so they took me to the front of the shower and as I got there boy was it a foul smell coming from him. I greeted him cordially under the circumstances and asked him his cell program? He told me he stays on his bunk and sleeps and reads all day, of course I asked did he take showers? He said yeah and blamed him being funky because he had been standing in the shower all day with his state jumpsuit on, ok I went for that. And told him I'm cool laid back in the cell and be in my studies and writing for The Beat Within. He was good with that, so I said we could hook up. Let me say Beat family honestly from the beginning I sensed something was wrong with this man's mental state even before I had got to the shower but YAHWEH (god) had put it on my heart to go get this guy as a cellie.

The C/O's was even shocked about me agreeing to take this guy as a cellie. I told them when YAHWEH (god) says move I gotta move I'm a soldier in his army period. So he came to the cell and we both signed the compatible form to live together (ain't that something, like we married these people are crazy), but little did I know what I was in store for. However YAHWEH also showed me it wasn't about me but helping this brother in need.

Also keep in mind a week before this a guy a few cells down killed his cellmate early in the morning right before breakfast and it was my old cell, wow! It seems CDC "R" is promoting this in a real way. How? By putting mentally unstable guys in the cell with a prisoner who has a lot of time and so called nothing to lose or a lot of personal stuff on his mind. Trust me more than one C/O has said to me they like it when guys kill their cellies, it's a lot more to this and political so I aint gonna get into that part this time. Now back to this guy let's call him A.

Well soon as a got in the cell I had the C/O'S get him a new jumpsuit, it was funky and filthy. He said he had it for 90 days with no exchange. Also I had the get him all new laundry boxers, shirts, sox etc, he only had one pair of boxers, shirt and one sox which was all dirty, trust me it was sad. I also asked him to wash up because he was noticeably funky which he did promptly. Afterward we made small conversation and he even showed me pictures of his family, by the way from appearance he has a nice family. And from what I can grasp they truly love A. And he seems to love them even in his state of mind.

I asked him to put some deodorant on you know to help keep the funk down in this tiny cell we both have to occupy. He told me that the brand new deodorant that was on his shelf was not his but that it belonged to a guy who he was waiting to come get it. I asked who? But he couldn't say no name or

This is both the most sad and most sweet piece we've read in a long time. It's sad because many people out here don't really know all the cold-hearted things that go on in prison. How even people with mental disabilities get treated like they're everything less than human when really they just need someone (who cares) to assist them through life. The piece is sweet because where most of us very sick and twisted individuals would've plotted to take advantage of such a situation, this next Beat veteran used this experience as a chance to attempt to lend a very helping hand. In this story, he takes in a very funky individual as a cellmate (most of us know how hard it is to live with a cellmate who's funky) and ends up finding out he's mentally running backwards in his journey through life. But instead of taking advantage of him like most of these stereotypes and judgments out here would believe we do, Nasir opens up his mind, body, and soul to offer his assistance. The story doesn't end the way we may have enjoyed, but we can tell it's as real as it gets. Nasir and his very kind and compassionate heart are writing from Kern Valley State Prison in Delano, CA. If the world took lead from Nasir, we believe it would be a much better place to live in, but hey, that's just our opinion. Read on and form your own...

nothing, he didn't even know where this guy was coming from. I couldn't believe this older guy (he is 44 yrs old) believed this children's story he was telling me. But YAHWEH (god) quickly let me know and reminded me this guy's mental state was not all there so be patient because he's going through slow pain. So for the next three days I played along with him and what he believed and kept praying for him. YAHWEH knows he needs all the prayer he can get, y'all please pray for him too.

Well the third day stuff just went off the chain. Look we both wake up and wash up and get ready for breakfast, we gotta eat fast because in the hole here they give you two minutes to eat, three if you blessed. Well, A said he wasn't eating cause he was fasting, ok I dig that because I fast too but trust me he's on some other stuff when it comes to fasting. I gotta let YAHWEH deal with him on that.

Well the food came and I ate good that Sunday morning thanks to brother A. but I sensed something was wrong. After they picked up trays and what not A. went on one. He started saying I gotta get outta here and that he needed surgery done on his face because it was hurting but wasn't nothing wrong with his face at all. He had even shaved his wild beard the day before so now he looked younger but he thought something was wrong with his face. I kept trying to convince him wasn't nothing wrong with his face and he was alright, however he was rubbing and touching his face saying he needed surgery on his face because it was hurting. His writing was terrible, I told him I'd help but he said no and hurried up and threw the medical slip under the cell door onto the tier. I told him it's supposed to go through the spot in the side of the door and that the MTA would not pick up his slip. And she did not pick up his slip when she came by.

Well I got tired of him saying he needed surgery on his face so I told him I had surgery done on my knee and know the people who do face surgery but he gotta wait 'til night time. He kept saying he need to go now and he even told me several times to fire (hit) on him but of course I couldn't and wouldn't. I was always taught you don't take advantage of the mentally ill no matter what. Anyways he asked me could I do surgery? I said I'm no doctor, he said yes you are. So I began to play along again. I told him to lie down on the floor, gotta prepare him for surgery as he did I got a blanket (his) and rolled it like a pillow and put it under his head and then wrapped his sheet around him all the way up to his neck, he was fully dressed and had his shoes on. He never liked taking his shoes off and even slept in them at night until I let him know he could get comfortable. Anyways I went into a doctor mood, you know acted like one.

Well I told him to relax and began to massage his face and told him I was doing surgery, I asked him how it was feeling he said good and that he never had that kind of surgery before but he liked it. I told him he had to be quiet and then I got new toilet paper and wrapped his face up like a mummy. I left him there for over an hour and he even went to sleep while I wrote a letter to his people concerning his condition and mental state from my observation and what YAHWEH (God) allowed to see.

I had looked at his pictures with his permission and there

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was a letter with them and it had pictures on it but something told me to read the letter. Trust me I normally don't read other individual's stuff but I felt the lord telling me to read it, glad I did. Because his family and sister was pleading for him to write them and send them visiting forms so he could see his ailing mother. She has Alzheimer's disease and is 79 yrs of age, man the doctors don't give her that long to live. Well they wanna bring A's mother to come see him before anything happens to her. But the problem is he won't send no visiting forms and when he does he doesn't sign them. Keep in mind I got all this from the letter, A doesn't communicate on that level, he's in another world. Well I immediately got 5 visiting forms and made A sign and date them, and then I wrote a long sincere letter to his sister letting her know A's mental state and what was going on with him...

I also let her know I'm a humble servant of the most high YAHWEH (God) of the universe and didn't mean no harm by writing but was just helping my neighbor and cellie and doing as the Bible says to do.

Well after all this happen A. went on one again and while I was finishing that letter to his sister he did something real foul, let me just say most guys in here would of caught a murder for what he did. Put it this way imagine a dog licking up his own vomit and then smiling about it but it wasn't vomit. Anyways after he cleaned it up good, he put a sheet around his neck and I called man down because he wasn't gonna kill himself with me in the cell, I plan on going home one day YAWEH willing.

Well they took him to suicide watch and even tried to accuse me of helping him, keep in mind I didn't help him do

nothing this man is obviously being tortured by demons and needs help with his mental state. I'm praying for him because I know we don't wrestle with flesh and blood but with or against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places. Right now I'm dumping on the devil cause what I just said is so real but people overlook it because they're spiritually blind.

A C/O let me know he will probably be in prison physical ward for a minute because of his state of mind. The cold thing is he's not on any type of psychological medication or receiving no mental health counseling what so ever. But its obvious his mental state has deteriorated drastically since being in prison, it's sad but that's what this system does to guys. And they don't even care especially if a guy in here that doesn't have any family that's in his life and advocating for him. But I did urge A's family and sister to get in his life and call up here as much as possible and enquire about his mental state and try to get him some help in a real way. I ain't with individuals taking medication because of personal reasons (will share another time about that) however I do believe people with a mental illness need extra love and attention. So I'ma do my part and hope and pray others do theirs in this struggle we call life and must all go through.

To the youngsters out there don't be afraid to help someone with a mental illness when you can but if it's gonna hurt you please get help, don't need two people with a mental illness. I left out some stuff because I wanted A to still have some dignity.

## Words Of Wisdom

Please allow me to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Jesus Guerrero. I'm a 38-year-old Mexican American. I was born in Dallas, Texas but raised here in San Francisco, California Mission District. I grew up in the heart of the Mission District in the early '80s when it was a gang/drug infested area, so I'm very familiar with the whole gang life style.

Honestly speaking, I've also seen a big change in the whole gang life style. You see, at one point in time, I used to be the problem out there in the streets. But now as I've gotten older and wiser, I've come to understand that the gang lifestyle I once lived leads to no avail. In 1994, I was sent to prison for 12 years for a crime that I did not commit. I spent ten years in Pelican Bay Security Housing (SHU) because I was validated as prison gang member. I paroled from Pelican Bay (SHU) in 2002. Being that I had no work skills or any educational background to help me succeed in the real world as a responsible citizen, I went back to my old way of living, I turned back to what I knew best (the streets, my homeboys and selling drugs). Eventually I ended up back in prison for violating my parole.

My reason for writing to you is because I know there's a gang epidemic here in the streets of San Francisco. There are a lot of young kids and innocent people falling victim to the gang violence which is occurring right now in our neighborhoods. I personally believe that if you really want to stop gang violence, than you need to stop it before it happens. As an ex member, I truly believe you need to educate the kids who are incarcerated at juvenile hall, or those who are destined to be incarcerated. In other words, these at risk youth are the ones who will be taking the place of those older teenagers. If you educate our youth about gangs and their results behind it all, you would have

## JESUS GUERRERO

*As we've said before, one of the best parts of this work is to hear new voices of experience reaching out to teach something of supreme value. Such is the case with "Words Of Wisdom" by Jesus Guerrero. This came to The Beat in a personal letter to one of the editors who decided it's too good to keep to himself. (References to specific gangs and streets are omitted to respect our Beat policies.) We hope every young person reads this and feels the strength of one who has walked where too many still walk, believing that what they do is righteous, as our writer once believed. The difficulty with advice from "older and wiser heads" is that they are directed to those who are not yet older and not yet wiser, living as if they are immune from the consequences of their acts. All we can do is to thank Mr. Guerrero for speaking a difficult truth from his cell in the San Francisco County Jail where he currently resides.*

less of a problem when they get older.

I personally know what being a victim of gang violence is all about. A year ago. I was the victim of a gang attack. I was stabbed ten times, and I'm very blessed to live and tell about it. I'm against all gang activity because it's taking the lives of so many young kids. These kids are dying in the streets over something they know nothing about. I believe that if we are going to take control of our neighborhoods, then we need to educate our youth about the results of the gang lifestyle. I believe I could be a useful tool in helping our youth find alternatives to that which appeals to them in belonging to a gang and living that lifestyle, especially in our beautiful city.

I used to do gang presentation work at San Mateo Juvenile hall. I spoke to kids about the whole gang lifestyle I once lived. Many listened to what I had to say, being that I was well known and respected for having lived the gang life. There are experienced people who are more than willing to take part in stopping gang violence, but you have all the power in helping us to do our part...

Please consider my letter as a help to stopping the violence. I'm right here waiting to receive your input. Feel free to consult me in whatever capacity you wish pertaining to this matter. Respecto.



*I personally believe that if you really want to stop gang violence, than you need to stop it before it happens.*

*read the rest of Jesus Guerrero's BWO piece on page 59*

